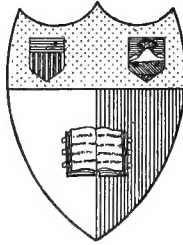


The M.P. for Russia

REMINISCENCES & CORRESPONDENCE OF
MADAME OLGA NOVIKOFF





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THE M.P. FOR RUSSIA



Olga Novikoff.
née Kireeff
1875.

The
M.P. for Russia

REMINISCENCES & CORRESPONDENCE

OF

MADAME OLGA NOVIKOFF

EDITED BY

W. T. STEAD

VOLUME ONE

LONDON: ANDREW MELROSE

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l. l.

PREFACE

“**M**ADAME NOVIKOFF,” said Lord Beaconsfield in the stormy days of the Bulgarian Atrocity Agitation of 1876-78, “I call Madame Novikoff the M.P. for Russia in England.”

This was not at the time regarded as a friendly remark. After thirty years have passed it reads like an extravagant compliment. Lord Beaconsfield, who was an expert in flattery, never framed a subtler phrase than that in which he “placed” Madame Novikoff. For in the most critical period of Anglo-Russian relations, from 1876 to 1880, Madame Novikoff represented Russia in England better than any one else.

Ambassadors represent Governments, M.P.’s represent the people. And it was as the representative of the Russian nation when it was engaged in liberating the Christians of the Balkan that Madame Novikoff won her right to be hailed by the Prime Minister of Great Britain as the M.P. for Russia in England.

Ever since the visit of the King to the Tsar at Reval in June 1908 there has been a general feeling of satisfaction expressed over the happy consummation of the negotiations carried on by Sir Edward Grey and Lord Morley on the one hand, and M. Isvolski on the other, for the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian

Agreement. It is a source of congratulation that it should now, almost for the first time, be officially recognised that Russia and England are very good friends, that their interests in the East are in no way antagonistic, and that they can agree to live together in that continent in peace and harmony. But while we may pay all honour to the negotiators who have placed the coping-stone upon this edifice of international goodwill, we ought not to forget those who laid its foundations. Liberal foreign ministers and Indian secretaries can now conclude such an agreement with Russia, but it would have been impossible without the pioneer labours of those who, in time of storm and contumely, laid broad and deep in the moral consciousness of both nations the foundations upon which their successors have been building. The real credit for the Anglo-Russian entente does not primarily belong to their respective ministers who happen to be temporarily in occupation of the Foreign Offices. More than anybody else its real authors were Madame Novikoff and Mr. Gladstone, who thirty years ago, at a time when this country went mad,—for in those days Jingoism was born,—stood together shoulder to shoulder to help this good cause ; who worked together loyally and courageously to combat the mad-fool prejudices of their respective countries, and so gave to the world a demonstration of loyal comradeship in the cause of an Anglo-Russian entente.

In Lord Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, the necessity of compressing the story of so long and illustrious a career within the narrow compass of three volumes rendered it impossible for the author to do anything like justice to this incident in Mr. Gladstone's career. It is quite possible to read Lord

Morley's narrative of the part played by Mr. Gladstone in the Eastern Question, from 1876 to 1880, although he quotes some of the letters to Madame Novikoff, acknowledged or unacknowledged, without realising the significance of the share of Madame Novikoff in that movement. No one, for instance, would imagine from the staid and restrained pages of Lord Morley's book that during the whole of this trying time, when Mr. Gladstone, as he told us, was doing his utmost to counterwork the policy of Lord Beaconsfield, he was in close and constant communication with Madame Novikoff; that the two acted together with singular harmony of purpose; that on subjects relating to their common cause they acted in co-operation after consultation; and that Mr. Gladstone was brave enough, and true enough to the best interests of his country, not to be afraid of identifying himself, publicly and privately, with "the Member for Russia." In nothing does the remarkable courage and chivalry of Mr. Gladstone shine out in more marked contrast to the mean timidity of many other public men than in his readiness to co-operate with Madame Novikoff in counsel and in action in opposition to the Government of his own country, when in his judgment that Government was betraying the cause of justice and humanity. We can well imagine the exultant yell of indignation which would have arisen from the Jingo journals of 1877 to 1880 if the close co-operation between Mr. Gladstone and Madame Novikoff had been brought out in all its fulness at that time. Not a few pseudo-Liberals of the baser sort would have been profoundly disgusted to find how far their leader had "compromised" himself with this "Russian agent." Madame Novikoff was nobody's agent: she was a

Russian patriot, who was often in vehement opposition to her own Government, and who was devoted heart and soul to the cause of the oppressed Slavs, in whose defence her brother had laid down his life.

Mr. Gladstone, with his keen eye for sterling goodness of character and sincere conviction, did not hesitate to enter into an informal but most useful partnership with Madame Novikoff for the purpose of securing a good understanding between Russia and England in the cause of civilisation and humanity in the East. It was this co-operation of the English statesman with the Russian lady in 1876-78 which rendered the Agreement of 1907 possible.

When Baron Brunnow in 1873 introduced Madame Novikoff on the same evening to Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli he little knew what a service he was rendering to his country. It is possible that this introduction was the most useful act that any Russian Ambassador to this country has been privileged to perform since the Crimean War. Madame Novikoff, without any official position or any diplomatic standing, was able, by the glow of her womanly enthusiasm, by her keen intelligence and accurate information, to do more than Count Schouvaloff ever did to avert the war which Lord Beaconsfield seemed to be bent upon bringing about.

The action which she took in 1876 exercised an important influence upon the history of two nations. Its importance has often been questioned by those who have had no opportunity of knowing the part which Madame Novikoff was privileged to play in the Eastern crisis of 1876 to 1880. It has been purposely minimised by those who knew the facts, but for various reasons considered it better to conceal them. During all the discussions that have taken

place in the last twenty years as to the part taken by Madame Novikoff, she has preserved scrupulous silence. It was possible for her at any time to have told the whole story and published the letters which would have rendered further controversy impossible. She had full permission to do so from the persons most concerned. She had frequently been pressed to write her autobiography. But to all such overtures she returned an absolute negative. It was repugnant to her temperament to write about herself. Hence there was some danger that the story of one of the most interesting episodes in our recent history would never be told. Under these circumstances, I felt it my duty, as one of her oldest friends, to step in and offer to edit Madame Novikoff's correspondence. My qualification for the task of Editor lies in the fact that, as she was a constant contributor to the *Northern Echo* during the whole of that critical period, I was in close communication with her, and that we were both in the forefront of the hottest battle. It has been to me a great source of satisfaction to feel that in editing this book I may repay some slight instalment of the debt which we in England at least owe to Madame Novikoff.

I have the less hesitation in undertaking the task because Mr. Gladstone had entrusted to me his papers, including much of his correspondence with Madame Novikoff, for the purpose of writing the story of the national protest against the Turkish Alliance, which began in 1876 and culminated in 1880. That book I have never been able to write, although Mr. Carlyle was very anxious that I should carry out my project. In this book I have at least an opportunity of performing part of my task so far as it relates to Madame Novikoff's share in the movement. Mr. Gladstone told

me that he had no objection whatever to the publication of every letter that he had ever written to Madame Novikoff, and he himself gave me several of Madame Novikoff's letters to him, to be used for the purpose of writing the story of that time. Notwithstanding this express permission from Mr. Gladstone himself, Madame Novikoff preferred to postpone the publication of the correspondence until after the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian entente. This she believed to be more in accordance with the wishes, not so much of Mr. Gladstone as of Mrs. Gladstone, who, when communicating to her Mr. Gladstone's permission to make "discreet and guarded use" of his letters, added a caution which showed she feared that in the then state of public opinion it might do mischief to the cause if it were known that they were in correspondence. I quote here this letter of Mrs. Gladstone's, written at the time when the controversy was at its height—that is to say, in the period between 1876 and 1880:—

"January 4.

"One little line, dear Madame Novikoff. I send you a letter my husband received, which he thinks worth your reading. He says to me that you have scruples in using his letters, but you are perfectly entitled to make a discreet and guarded use of them, I am sure. *My* view is that you should be very careful as to speaking of receiving letters, for if it were so, it might do mischief in the jealous state of the public mind at home. You will understand me.—Yours sincerely,

"CATH. GLADSTONE."

Madame Novikoff preserved silence for nearly thirty years, and has consented to my making a

“discreet and guarded use” of the letters ten years after Mr. Gladstone’s death, when “the jealous state of the public mind” no longer exists which could “do mischief” to any cause or any person. Surely discretion could no farther go.

The book, however, covers a much wider range of interest than the controversy that arose out of the Bulgarian atrocities and the Servian War of 1876. Madame Novikoff’s salon at one time was one of the most brilliant political centres of London. Madame Novikoff assembled round her the most distinguished political and scientific men of the day. Mr. Kinglake and Mr. Carlyle, Mr. Froude and Mr. Lecky, Lord Clarendon and Mr. Villiers, Count Beust, Count Bylandt, Sir Mackenzie Wallace, Sir Robert Morier, Canon Liddon, Abraham Hayward, and Professor Tyndall were a few of the brilliant galaxy of which Madame Novikoff was the centre. Since the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, and the subsequent troubles in Russia, Madame Novikoff has discontinued her receptions. But all her life she has corresponded with many of the most distinguished men of our time, whose reminiscences shed bright rays of light on European life in the last quarter of the century.

I have failed and come far short of doing justice to my task as editor. But notwithstanding my shortcomings, I venture to hope that at last the world will begin for the first time to realise Madame Novikoff.

WILLIAM T. STEAD.

January 1909.

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MADAME KIRÉEFF.
Mother of Madame Novikoff.

THE M.P. FOR RUSSIA

PART I.

1841-1875.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

WHENEVER conversation flagged in a London drawing-room at the end of the seventies there was no more infallible specific than to mention the name of Madame Olga Novikoff. Who was she, what was she doing, why was she in London? "She is the Member for Russia," said Lord Beaconsfield, coining the title which I have appropriated for this volume of reminiscences. "She is a Russian agent," said the Russophobists of the meaner sort, oblivious of the fact that their own favourite newspapers afforded more information to the Russian Government than could be gleaned by any "agent" in London society. According to Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett,¹ the one thorough-

¹ Mr., afterwards Sir, Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, born 1840, M.P. for Eye 1880-85, and from 1885 till his death M.P. for Sheffield (Eccleshall), Civil Lord of the Admiralty in Lord Salisbury's Administration. The remark referred to above occurs in an interview published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* (May 8, 1885) and is textually as follows:—

"As for Madame Novikoff, it is simply impossible to estimate the

going Russophobic then extant in the House of Commons, Madame Novikoff strengthened Russia more in the crisis 1876-78 than if she had equipped an army corps of one hundred thousand men. "Madame Novikoff," said others, who were neither Russophobes nor Russophiles, "is the representative of unofficial Russia. The ambassador of the Russian Government lives at Chesham Place, but the ambassadress of the Russian nation is to be found at Claridge's Hotel."

These, however, by no means exhausted the things that men and women said of her. Madame Novikoff was described as the mysterious enchantress from Moscow, a kind of Russian Lorelei, whose melodious voice lured British statesmen to their fate. Men admired her and fell in love with her, but never compromised her; for even the tongue of lawless scandal never meddled with her good name. Women were jealous of her, as was inevitable, nor was it altogether without cause. Not that Madame Novikoff was to blame, for how could she help it if husbands loved to linger for an hour in the little salon where the most brilliant men and women attended her court?

"Madame de Lieven¹ has been reincarnated in

services she has rendered to her country. Not all the diplomatic corps of the Empire and all the Grand Dukes have done as much for Russia as that lady, who since 1877 has directed the Russian campaign in England with consummate ability. She has been worth more to Russia than an army of 100,000 men. Nothing that the Tsar could bestow upon her could adequately repay her peerless services."

¹ Princess Lieven was born Dorothea Benckendorff in December 1784, the daughter of a Russian general. In her sixteenth year she married Count Lieven, who in 1812 was appointed Russian Ambassador in London. She was then twenty-eight years old, and until she was thirty-five she seems to have taken no part in English politics. She was supreme in every society which she entered, and she was the most intimate friend of the first man in England, of the first man in Austria, and also of M. Guizot.

The *Quarterly Review* says: "From her first arrival in London

Madame Novikoff, and has been improved by the process," said one of her innumerable admirers, "for she acclimatised herself as no other foreigner has ever done, and she found intimate friends in both sexes. Her friendships were altogether irrespective of party. She was successively on the most confidential terms with Castlereagh, Canning, Wellington, Palmerston, Lord John Russell, Aberdeen, and especially with Earl Grey. The Egeria of so many statesmen at deadly feud had undoubtedly the wisdom of the serpent, and in tact and finesse she was a female Talleyrand. She had none of the stinging wit of the diplomatist, but at first her vivacity was uncontrollable, and she never pretended to the gentleness of the dove."

The *Edinburgh Review* says: "No other woman who ever lived was the intimate confidante of so many men of first-rate eminence; she inspired Lord Grey with a passion which makes one smile. In the last twenty years of her life she was bound to M. Guizot by ties of the tenderest attachment, and these were only two of the many men of mark who hovered round the candle and were singed by the flame."

"If her influence was great it was on the whole wisely and beneficially employed. She laboured to promote and maintain a good understanding between this country and Russia in the earlier part of her life, and was instrumental in promoting the *entente cordiale* between France and England towards the close of it. With the intellect of a man and the sensibilities of a woman, she exerted her sway over monarchs and statesmen, and obtained, through their means, an influence which few women have enjoyed."

It was on account of the scandals associated with the name of her famous predecessor that Madame Novikoff always deprecated these parallels between herself and Princess Lieven. On one occasion she wrote in somewhat disparaging terms of Princess Lieven to Kinglake, who replied in his usual vein of sarcastic compliment. Canon Tuckwell refers as follows to this incident in his *Life of Kinglake*: "He quotes with approbation the newspaper comparison of her to the Princess Lieven. She disparages the famous ambassadress; he sets her right. Let her read the 'Correspondence' by his friend Mr. Guy Le Strange, and she will see how large a part the Princess played in keeping England quiet during the war of 1828-29. She did not convert her austere admirer, Lord Grey, to approval of the Russian designs, nor overcome the uneasiness with which the Duke of Wellington regarded her intrigues; but the Foreign Minister, Lord Aberdeen, was apparently a tool in her hands; and, whoever had the merit, the neutrality of England continued. That was, he repeats, more than once, a most critical time for Russia; it was an object of almost life and death to the Tsar to keep England dawdling in a state of actual though not avowed neutrality. It is, he argued, a

Princess Lieven used means which Madame Novikoff would never dream of using." But it was Madame de Lieven democratised. Madame de Lieven was the wife of the Russian ambassador in the thirties, when great Whig ladies reigned in aristocratic dignity; Madame Olga Novikoff came forty years later, when the era of Whiggism had given place to the day of democracy, and her appeal was to the whole nation. Madame Novikoff was not only a grande dame, she was a journalist, pamphleteer, author, and London correspondent of the *Moscow Gazette* and of the Slavophile Press. Writing once in joke, she said, "I am a Nihilist so far as conventionalities are concerned," and she wrote truth in jest. Party politician she could hardly be said to be, although diplomatist to her finger-tips. Theologian also, of a certain fiery polemical vehemence. Labouring to heal the schisms which distract Christendom, she was thrown much among the High Anglicans and the Old Catholics, and was almost as familiar with the controversies that raged round the *Filioque*¹ as with the clauses of the Berlin Treaty.

And behind all this, as the constant background and all-pervading atmosphere, was the presence of a gracious, generous, sympathetic woman, active in all good works, liberal almost to recklessness in the relief of distress, more passionately earnest in attempting to help some poor compatriot or some struggling artist,

matter of fact, and 'I shall be slow to believe that Madame de Lieven did not deserve a great share of the glory (as you would think it) of making England act weakly under such circumstances; more especially since we know that the Duke did not like the great lady, and may be supposed to have distinctly traced his painful embarrassment to her power.' "

¹ The *Filioque*, so named from the clause defining the Holy Ghost. The Eastern Church holds that the third person in the Trinity proceeds from the Father alone; the Western Church from the Father and the Son. See Chapter VIII.

Russian or alien, than to secure for herself any recognition of the services she had rendered to her country.

It is no easy task to present in black and white a faithful picture of a spirit so antithetically mixed. Autocratic in theory, aristocratic by heredity, and democratic by sympathy, the friend and ally of Pobédonostzeff and of Gladstone, standing at the opposite political poles, she lived constantly in the closest communion with the most orthodox of the Greek Church and the most advanced of the English Nonconformists. With all the charm and sweetness and fascination of a woman she combined the resolution and the strength of a man. Her character was so complex that no two of her friends agreed exactly in their estimate. As for her enemies, they were never able to agree as to why she deserved condemnation. But those who loved her—and they included all who knew her intimately—were aware that below all these coruscating, conflicting rays which confused and dazzled the observer there was a massive foundation of good-temper, a warm heart, and the quick, intuitive sympathy of a nature instinctively responsive to every lofty emotion and every generous ideal.

Of a vehement and impulsive nature, she could at times “say things”; and as she said things well, the dart sometimes went home. But although the claw is there and the claw can scratch, it is always well concealed.

The editing of the correspondence of one who objects on principle to write any reminiscences, and whose letters are in the hands of many persons in many lands, is no holiday task. Taking my courage in both hands, I must boldly plunge, and plunge at the beginning.

More than thirty years ago Madame Olga Novikoff

was surprised by an unexpected visit in her Brighton hotel from a pious Evangelical nobleman. He was the founder of a religious sect, who came to labour with her for her soul's salvation. His first question on entering her room was, "How old are you?" Startled by that curious *entrée en matière*,—for he was the first British peer she had met on his native soil,—she satisfied his curiosity.

"No," he replied; "tell me—since when do you believe in Jesus?"

"Ever since I was born. In Russia children are baptized generally on the third day of their existence. When they are very weak, baptism takes place even on the first day."

All this did not satisfy her strange visitor.

"Since when do you believe in salvation?"

"But really," answered Madame Novikoff, a little impatiently, "Christianity teaches belief in salvation. Everybody knows that!"

Her visitor's response was to fall upon his knees, murmuring, "Let us pray!"

"I thought he was going to make a declaration," she was wicked enough to say afterwards, "and I rose to ring the bell. I never quite remember how I escaped."

"Next day his wife called and submitted me to the same interrogation, so I fled from Brighton at once."

The following year this same nobleman went to Switzerland, where he met a Russian friend of Madame Novikoff's. The latter eagerly inquired after her.

"Do you know her? How is she?"

"Oh, I have nothing good to tell you about her," the Englishman replied gravely. "I am afraid she is lost!"

"What do you mean?" almost shouted the Russian

"How, where, when has she been lost? I saw nothing in the papers about her accident!"

"She is alive," replied his lordship. "I used the word 'lost' because she does not believe in salvation."

"Thank God!" exclaimed the Russian, quite rejoiced. "I got such a shock. If it is only a question of salvation, I don't mind. Her sins are not very great."

The conversation took place in the presence of another Russian, who was very much amused by the dialogue.

The question as to a lady's age cannot be evaded when you write about royalties or celebrities.

Miss Olga Kiréeff was born in the holy city of Moscow on April 29, 1840. Her parents were of ancient lineage and of noble birth. Her mother, *née* Alexandra Alabieff, was a lady whose beauty enjoyed almost European reputation. She inspired the muse of Pushkin and other poets. Her father, Alexei Kiréeff, served in the Russian army, where he was an officer in a regiment of hussars employed in the suppression of the Polish insurrection of 1832. In that campaign he received the Cross of St. George for bravery in the field. He retired from the army, married, and lived at Moscow, or on the family estate Senkino, near Moscow, which now belongs to the Grand Duke Constantine. His wife bore him five children: Alexander, now full General, attached to the Court of the Grand Duke Constantine; Olga, and Nicholas, and two others who died in infancy. Alexei Kiréeff was a man of lofty patriotism, of wide and generous sympathy with the oppressed. From his youth he associated with the Slavophiles, and as was not infrequently the case, he combined with his Slavophile enthusiasm a keen and sympathetic interest in

England. He was educated by a Scottish tutor of the name of Baxter, who was afterwards elected M.P. for Dundee, and who in still later years became a subordinate member of Mr. Gladstone's first Administration. Between the Scottish tutor and the Russian pupil a warm friendship sprang up, which lasted until the latter went to study at Leipsic University. English became his second language, and Miss Alabieff was equally familiar with our tongue. Their correspondence before and after their marriage was carried on chiefly in English, a fact which suggests one source of the extraordinary command of English of which their daughter was in after years to make such good use. The Tsar Nicholas¹ was the godfather of all their children.

Little Miss Olga was no sooner out of the nursery than she was handed over to the care of governesses, who found their young charge a real handful. Passionate, affectionate, spoiled, she was always playing pranks upon her governesses, whose lives were often made such a burden that none of them remained more than a year. She was quick and clever, fond of books, and before she was in her teens she could talk Russian, English, French, and German.

The family was a happy one and remarkable for the great affection which prevailed between the brothers and their sister. Alexei Kiréeff was a very devoted father, and one of the earliest reminiscences of Madame Novikoff was that of waking in the night and finding her father kneeling by her bedside praying fervently for her welfare. From her childhood she grew up in

¹ Nicholas I., Emperor of Russia, grandson of Catherine the Great, was born 1790; succeeded his brother, Alexander I., 1825; died March 2, 1855. Nicholas II., his great-grandson, born 1868, succeeded Alexander III. in 1894.



NICHOLAS I.
Emperor of Russia, 1825-1855.

an atmosphere of politics and philanthropy. Of her early childhood Madame Novikoff remembers little. She told me, "When father died in '49, the Emperor Nicholas was then in Moscow. He came to see mother and the children. My brothers saluted His Majesty as they were told, but I was ordered by my governess to pay a very, very deep courtesy, and alas! I obeyed that order only too well. Were it not for the support I got from a column, I would certainly have been lying on the floor. The Emperor guessed my tragic position, and rushed to my rescue. He even said, smiling, 'Bravo, Mademoiselle; quelle charmante révérence.' But there was no smiling for me: I felt anything but joyful."

Their house in Moscow was the favourite meeting-place of the Slavophiles and advocates for the emancipation of the serfs. Her father drew up an emancipation scheme twenty years before that reform was carried out. Khomiakoff the poet, whose son was elected in 1907 President of the third Duma, was a frequent visitor, and was with Alexei Kiréeff when he died. Ivan Aksakoff, whose eloquence did so much to rouse Russia to the crusade for the emancipation of Bulgaria, was another intimate friend of the Kiréeff family. Madame Novikoff was only nine years old when her father died and was buried in a cemetery near Moscow. Her brothers became Pages of the Chamber to the Empress, and afterwards entered the Guards, whilst their sister remained with her mother.¹

It was in the early days, when Miss Olga was

¹ "The Emperor appointed both my brothers in the Corps des Pages. Having been amongst the sixteen best pupils, they both became 'Kamer-Pages,' who were in personal attendance on the Empress in all the great ceremonies of the Court. Later on they entered the Horse Guards Regiment."—O. K.

devouring miscellaneously what literature was accessible, that the Anglophile sentiments which she had inherited from both parents received a severe shock. The *Memorials of St. Helena*, an edition in twenty-five small volumes, brought the young and enthusiastic girl into contact with the history of Napoleon. A Muscovite does not naturally become enthusiastic over the man whose invasion recoiled before the flames of the blazing city of Moscow, but to the impressionable Russian girl every convention of chivalrous warfare was violated by the British when they accepted the surrender of Napoleon on promise of his liberty, and then sent him to die in St. Helena. It shocked her as something almost inconceivable in its inhumanity, and a violent revulsion of feeling against the countrymen of Sir Hudson Lowe left a definite and abiding trace upon her mind.

When on the verge of sweet sixteen, she experienced the first and, so far as I have been able to ascertain, the only romantic episode in her early life. It came to her, as it comes to most young people of her temperament, through the gate of pity. She studied the history of German philosophy with an old German professor, very learned, very plain, and very wretched. An intense compassion sprang up in her heart for the lonely old teacher. She felt deeply for his poverty, his loneliness, and she thought how much he was in need of some one's help, companionship, and affection. The thought flashed across her brain, "If I married him, how comfortable I could make him and how happy he would be." To please him, to kindle in him some regard for her, became her determined wish. One day she took special pains to interest him in her essay on Hegel and his following. The work was not an easy one, and she hoped to be

appreciated and rewarded by her teacher's sympathy. The old man read her manuscript carefully, seemed pleased, and smiled; but then, alas! he said, "Ach Gott, if only you had been a boy, what a good professor of philosophy you would make!" That was all he said, and thus ended the romantic episode.

Her father died at the early age of thirty-seven. Her brothers had gone to St. Petersburg, and Miss Olga grew up in the company of her mother, her tutors, and her governesses. She had accompanied her mother on a visit to Germany a year before her marriage, a journey notable because it brought her into contact with Auerbach, the first of the many famous writers who have been numbered in the circle of her friends.

Auerbach's novels have never had much vogue in England, but at one time he was one of the best-known novelists in Germany. Of Jewish extraction, Auerbach was from his youth up a devoted disciple of Spinoza, whose writings he translated and whose philosophy he did much to popularise by introducing it into the conversations of the characters of his romances. He was between forty and fifty years of age when Miss Olga heard that he was living in Dresden, where she met a Russian authoress, Madame Pavloff by name. The latter undertook to introduce her to Auerbach. One day when they went to the Gallery they found Auerbach before the Madonna.

Madame Pavloff presented her young friend with the words—

"Here is a remarkable girl——"

Auerbach interrupted any further remarks by exclaiming, smiling—

"No phrases, Madame; here stands the Göttliche Madonna, and in her presence compliments and exaggerated phrases are not allowed."

Despite this somewhat unpromising introduction, the acquaintance thus begun soon ripened into friendship. Auerbach called upon her mother, and as Madame Kiréeff could speak no German and Auerbach knew neither French nor Russian, Miss Olga had to act as interpreter; and from interpreting his conversation with her mother, she soon carried on conversation on her own account. Auerbach appears to have been much impressed with the vivacity and enthusiasm of his young Russian friend, and paid her the compliment of putting some of her remarks into the mouth of his heroine in *Auf der Höhe*. The two found many points of sympathy. Years afterwards, when Auerbach came to Russia, Miss Olga, who had then become Madame Novikoff, was delighted to welcome him to her native land.

Politically she has always been afflicted with the prejudice of the Slav against the Semite, but this has never blinded her to the capacity and talent of Jewish authors. Auerbach was the first, but by no means the last, of her friends among the children of Israel. The charm of Auerbach was philosophical rather than personal. He was a thick, short man, of pronounced Jewish type; he was of a restless disposition, seldom living long in one place, and during the last twenty years of his life they seldom met.¹

¹ Auerbach Beethold, born at Nordstetten, in the Black Forest, 1812; died at Cannes 1882.



LIEUT.-GENERAL IVAN NOVIKOFF
AND HIS SON ALEXANDER (SASHA).

CHAPTER II.

GENESIS, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL.

IN 1860 Miss Olga Kiréeff married Ivan Novikoff, then Colonel of the État Major, who soon after became General, and was then attached to the Grand Duke Nicholas, brother of the Emperor Alexander II. In the second year of their married life their only son, Alexander, was born.

The family of the Novikoffs, into which Miss Olga Kiréeff had married, was one of the same position as her own. The Kiréeffs and the Novikoffs had been old acquaintances, but there was little sympathy between them, either in politics or in temperament. The Kiréeffs were Muscovite, Slavophile, humanitarian, enthusiastic, idealist, and religious; the Novikoffs, although men of the same world, were anything but Slavophiles. The mother of Ivan Novikoff, Madame Olga's husband, was a Princess Dolgourouki, the daughter of a Russian poet, Prince Ivan Dolgourouki. She was a Russian matron of the old school, who upheld the ancient Muscovite tradition which made the mother-in-law rather than the wife the mistress of the household. Her two sons, Ivan and Eugène, were brought up austere in the strictest school of Russian orthodoxy. Ivan Novikoff was especially learned in Latin and Greek and much devoted to the classics, which led to his appointment to the post of Curator of St. Petersburg University, which he held when he died. He

was twenty years the senior of his wife. Her first-born and only son was her all and his all-in-all. Eugène Novikoff, Ivan's younger brother, was for many years Russian ambassador at Vienna and Constantinople. He was married to Miss Titoff, the niece of the Russian ambassador at Constantinople.¹

After spending some months with her husband's parents in the country near Moscow, Madame Olga Novikoff came to St. Petersburg in 1861, where her son was born on April 22, O.S.

Madame Novikoff has not written much about her early life, but the following extract from an article written by her in 1880 gives a vivid picture of the state of Russia at the close of the Crimean War:—

“In spite of his noble efforts, of his devotion to his country, his constant anxiety to do only what was just and useful, Nicholas I. left to his son a heritage of woe. The realm, exhausted by a tremendous war, was morally, as materially, a wreck. Russia at that epoch was filled with antiquated ideas and absurd traditions, strange and opposing prejudices, conflicting interests. She had millions of serfs, but no schools and no roads. Her treasury was empty, the Russian seas were covered with hostile cruisers, and Sebastopol was yet stained with torrents of Russian blood. I was then only a child, but I remember as vividly as if it were but yesterday the horror of great darkness of that terrible time. The gloom was unbroken, or relieved only by those displays of moral heroism in which Russia has never failed even in the

¹ M. Eugène Novikoff, after leaving Moscow University, wrote a remarkable work on John Huss. It was only after his appointment to the Vienna Embassy that he became anti-Slav. Madame Novikoff drily remarks, “Austria has a power of demoralising people!”

darkest hour of her destinies. Boys of fifteen eagerly prepared themselves to serve their country in the field, and the mother's love for her son yielded to the voice of supreme patriotism. Sacrifices of life, of income, of all that is most cherished, were willingly made. With Russians patriotism is a passion and a religion. But although our brothers could die, there seemed no hope that their sacrifice could save our country from fresh disasters. Hope had gone out amongst us, and the courage of despair alone remained to us in the end.

"Whether we looked at home or abroad, everything was in ruins. Our military system had broken down, the administrative machinery of the state had almost collapsed. Emperor Nicholas, 'the Quixote of Autocracy,' could not survive the catastrophe which overwhelmed the régime to which he had devoted the arduous labours of thirty years; his hopes all blighted, his ideal for ever unrealised. Dying with a heart broken by the sight of the miseries of his people, the Emperor delivered over his realm to his son and successor with the command worthy of a Russian, to devote his life to the service of his country."¹

Five years later, in 1861, Alexander the Second, in Whittier's magniloquent phrase, "with the pencil of the Northern Star wrote freedom o'er his land," the decree of emancipation was signed and serfage was abolished. Russia seemed to be entering upon a new era of liberty and progress. Madame Novikoff, whose father had been one of the most ardent advocates of the emancipation, shared to the full the roseate hopes of young Russia. When the

¹ The "Emperor Alexander's Reforms."—*Fraser's Magazine*, Jan. 1881.

serfs were freed, Madame Novikoff was but twenty-one, newly married, full of life and hope and enthusiasm. Her son Alexander was born in the following year, and for the next twelve months she was absorbed with the nursing of her child; but as she had no other children, she had afterwards a good deal of leisure for study and for society. In those days she enjoyed to the full the pleasures of the cultivated society of the capital. She touched life at many points. It is difficult to say even now whether she was most interested in musical, artistic, ecclesiastical, political, or literary questions. She was passionately fond of music, sang remarkably well, had "Beethoven in her soul," and Anton Rubinstein was one of her great artist-friends.

In the early sixties the Grand Duchess Helena was the acknowledged queen of St. Petersburg society.¹

Grand Duchess Helena was the last survivor of the great tradition dating from the reign of Catherine, who made the Russian Court the centre of letters and of arts. The Empress Catherine, by her enthusiastic patronage of literature, set an illustrious example to the Court and to the women of Russia. Unable to attract to St. Petersburg the most eminent writers of the West, she carried on an assiduous correspondence for fifteen years with Voltaire and the leading philosophers of France. She bought the library of Diderot, yet allowed him to enjoy it, says Rambaud, and subscribed to the *Encyclopedie* when it was forbidden to appear in Paris. Diderot was entertained at St. Petersburg as if he had been a crowned head. She tried in vain to induce

¹ The Grand Duchess Helena was the daughter of Duke Paul of Würtemberg; she married, at the age of eighteen, the Grand Duke Michel in 1824, buried him in 1849, and began her salon in 1856.



CATHERINE THE GREAT.
Empress of Russia, 1762-1796.

D'Alembert to superintend the education of the heir to the throne. Nor was she content merely to be the hostess and the correspondent of men of letters. She herself wielded no unskilful pen. She edited a magazine, wrote prefaces to her Laws, story-books for her grandchildren, lyrical dramas and satirical comedies, political pamphlets and autobiographical memoirs. She founded the Russian Academy, aided in compiling a Russian dictionary, which numbered among its contributors ladies of the highest rank. Catherine could hardly have been regarded as a blue-stocking, but she made literature fashionable at Court, and princesses and countesses found time amid the dissipations of society to cultivate the muses.

Catherine died, leaving no successor capable of realising her splendid dreams.¹ But the fruits of her

¹ Catherine, deservedly styled the Great, reigned from 1762 to 1796. Notwithstanding faults of character to which excessive prominence has been given, she ranks among the greatest of the female sovereigns of the world. She was a great idealist whose real life was one long dream of the destined greatness of the Slavonic race. She raised a curtain, letting in a flood of Western light, showing her people the darkness in which they lay. Peter, like a Titan, hurled rock after rock, careless where they fell, so long as the buried life of the nation got an outlet—got air to breathe—got space wherein to move the cramped, almost paralysed limbs. Catherine's mission was to make order in this chaos. She began by contrasting the Russian blackness of darkness with the cold crudity of Western light, such as it was. That was merely the first beginning of a far-reaching scheme which she knew full well she could never do more than faintly foreshadow. But far off, in the remote distance of the future, Catherine foresaw the reaping of the glorious golden harvest that would spring from the seeds which she had sown—when the mighty kingdom of Slavonia, the crowned democracy of Asia, would represent more than the splendour of ancient Rome, more than the vainly desired perfection of classic Hellas, more than the would-be Imperialism of ubiquitous England. When the Slav shall come into his kingdom, the waning starlight of the West will be quenched and absorbed by the magnificence of the Eastern dawn. Such, at least, were the waking visions, the Imperial dreams of Catherine. See "The Arrival of the Slavs," *Contemporary Review*, January 1909.

sowing are but asleep, like seeds in the deep darkness of the earth; and Catherine's harvest will yet be reaped, in the far-off day when the Slav shall come to his kingdom.

The stimulus which she gave to Russian culture, and especially to that of Russian women, survives to this day, although at Court the great tradition seems well-nigh forgotten. It still lingered forty years ago in the Michel Palace—now converted into a great museum and picture gallery—where the Grand Duchess Helena held her Court, a court the like of which no Grand Duchess has since ventured to emulate. One especially delightful feature of her salon were the soirées morganatiques. These were held every Thursday evening. Her lady-in-waiting, Princess Lyoff, received the guests, who were bidden with sole regard to their talent and without reference to their rank. They met on a footing of perfect equality—men of letters, of science, travellers, and femmes du monde. Punctually at ten o'clock the Grand Duchess Helena appeared as if by chance and mingled with the company, who, although the state of the Grand Duchess was laid aside, never forgot or were allowed to forget that she was Grand Duchess.

A contemporary chronicler, the author of *Distinguished Persons in Russian Society*, thus describes the Palace Michel in the palmy days of the Grand Duchess Helena :—

“ Her house was, indeed, the central point of all the cultivated and interesting people of the capital; the ladies and gentlemen of her Court, the witty Editha von Rahden, the musical Fräulein Stubbe (now Frau Abasa), the chivalrous Baron Rosen, Count

M. Wielchorski, the excellent violoncello player von Nummers, and others, stood high above the ordinary mass by cultivation, intelligence, and moral dignity, and were well able to make any one of note feel at home in the Palais Michel. Here might be seen the coryphæi of the national and democratic party—men such as Miliutin, Kawelin, and Aksakoff—just as frequently as Baron Brewern, Count Keyserling, von Oettingen, the great naturalist and father of the doctrine of evolution, Privy Councillor von Bar, and the other representatives of the Courland nobility, as well as the ‘European Liberals,’ von Reutern, Golownin, and Waluieff, the friends of the Grand Duke Constantine. Each and all of these men the Grand Duchess knew how to fascinate ; her lively, pleasant conversation, which in itself was not without its charm, was based on a tolerable education and was kept alive by a love of reading and knowledge which expended itself not only in all the more important works of Russian, French, and German literature, but which possessed sufficient energy to keep pace with the numerous memoirs and treatises which were presented to the noble politician. Fräulein von Rahden, the favourite lady of the Court, was not to be surpassed in the art of making short compendiums of the bulkiest works, and for years German scholars joined this most unusual woman in her task, finding plenty to do in sifting the material with which the indefatigable royal reader was supplied. Without regard for the changeful caprice of the ‘grand’ Court, Helena Pavlovna opened the doors of her hospitable mansion to all who were conspicuous for mind and cultivation, equally amiable in her intercourse with old and young, with recognised and rising greatness. So thoroughly in earnest was the lively,

versatile woman with her motto, 'Homo sum: nihil humani a me alienum puto,' that, in the summer of 1862, the absurd rumour arose that the Emperor's aunt stood in close connection with Herzen and other heads of the Russian emigration party—a malicious invention without any foundation, nevertheless evidencing the freedom of tone prevailing in the Michailow Palace, and which was in many respects very different from that of the Winter Palace occupied by the reigning Sovereign.

"Yet not only statesmen and publicists but all artists and scholars preferred this Court to any other in the Neva capital. Every year, as Lent and the time for concerts drew near, the city learned that one or another of the famous artists who had arrived from abroad had been invited to take up his abode in the palace of the art-loving Grand Duchess instead of in the expensive hotel Demouth. The musical evenings in the Palais Michel excluded all comparison with the entertainments which, 'for the sake of honour,' were held in the Winter Palace and in the Marble or Anitschin Castle (the residences of the Grand Duke Constantine and of the Heir Apparent), in order to put a stop to the complaints raised at the decline of art in Petersburg. At all the other courts the artists had a sense of being exhibited in public; with the Grand Duchess they were not only received with honour on account of their names, but also on account of their achievements. By wider circles also the patroness of authors and artists was especially valued and beloved for another quality—namely, for the beneficence in which she delighted and which she carried on with plan and method, not for the sake of show, but for permanent benefit to others; and in this also she was guided by



THE GRAND DUCHESS HELENA PAVLOVNA.

the skilful hand of the excellent Fräulein von Rahden.”¹

In this centre of culture Madame Novikoff was ever a welcome guest, and she often recalls with grateful affection the memory of the Grand Duchess, who, alas! left no successor to carry on her work. There is little doubt that to these early days may be traced the origin of the simplicity, the culture, and the ease which have always distinguished the salon of Madame Novikoff. She was no unworthy scion of the Court of the Grand Duchess Helena. The Michel Palace is so spacious a building that on the Sunday nights of Reception, concerts, theatricals, games, dancing, and conversation parties were all going on at the same time. In a capital which at that time had no parliament, the Michel Palace came as near being a substitute as was possible. There speech was free and men of all parties and of none exchanged their comments upon the affairs of the day. Nor were light amusements forgotten; the game of Secrétaire was much in vogue, when each player had to write an answer to a given question, the answers being read out to the Grand Duchess. Here are a few examples: “What is a woman?” would be one question. Answer: “The kernel of a crinoline.” “What do you think when you look in a mirror?” “Honi soit qui mal y pense.”

Madame Olga Novikoff greatly enjoyed the opportunities the Grand Duchess afforded her of seeing not only the best Russian society but of meeting also the intellectual aristocracy.

Madame Novikoff in those days was associated

¹ *Distinguished Persons in Russian Society*, translated from the German by F. E. Bunnètt (London, 1873), pp. 13-16.

with the Slavophiles, Samarin, Aksakoff, and others, who regarded with alarm the revolutionary and, as they thought, anti-Russian propaganda which Alexander Herzen was conducting through his organ the *Kolokol*—that “Bell” whose peal is still echoing across the Russian steppes.

If the salon of the Grand Duchess Helena may be regarded as the influence which did most to shape and form the aspirations of Madame Novikoff from a social point of view, the genesis of her political ideas can be no less clearly traced. Madame Novikoff has always been in more or less sharp antagonism to the revolutionary party and to the revolutionary exiles in London. This, although natural and inevitable, has often provoked criticism and excited indignation in some who find it impossible to realise that a cultured, liberal-minded citizen of the world like Madame Novikoff can be out of sympathy with the revolutionary movement which finds its last word in the bomb of the assassin.

Madame Novikoff is a Slavophile, a member of the Pan-Slavonic party from her cradle, trained in it from her earliest childhood, and confirmed in her faith by the political surroundings of her early womanhood. The Slavophile point of view is somewhat difficult to make quite clear to Westerns whose politics are not based upon any philosophical conception and who are to a man opportunists. The Slavophile approaches problems of the world from a metaphysical, religious, and philosophical point of view. Having established himself firmly upon these foundations, he applies his principles to the solution of all questions of contemporary politics in a manner which in the West would be regarded as doctrinaire and visionary, but which is an essential characteristic of

the Slavophile. In Moscow, and afterwards in St. Petersburg, Madame Novikoff was constantly in the company of the loftier spirits of the Slavophile party. They had no sympathy with despotism, but they believed in the Slav race, and especially they believed in Russia, the elder brother of the Slavs. Holy Russia was to them what ideal England was to us, and their Pan-Slavonic faith anticipated in many points the spirit of ideal British Imperialism. The genuine Slavophile regarded his revolutionary compatriot not merely with the natural indignation with which the advocates of established order regard those who would turn a world upside down, but with the passionate contempt with which the believer in Greater Britain regards the Little Englander. The revolutionist is not merely an enemy to society, he is also a blasphemer against the sacred mission of the nation. The nearest analogy to the Slavophile school, in which Madame Novikoff was brought up, that can be found in English politics is the school of the Liberal Imperialists as distinguished from the jack-booted Imperialists of the Jingo stripe.

In this chapter of the origins of Madame Novikoff's political ideas some extracts may be given from a paper in which one of the leading Slavophiles of her acquaintance, M. George Samarin, replied to Alexander Herzen¹ when he was editing the *Kolokol*, the organ of revolutionary Russia in London. This document, which is characteristic of most of the utterances of this school, was written by Samarin in the shape of a letter to Herzen, after they had met

¹ Alexander Herzen, born in Moscow 1812, died in Paris 1870. Imprisoned as a student in 1834, he left Russia in 1846, came to London 1851, where he published the first Russian revolutionary journal, the *Kolokol* (the Bell).

in London, where they had discussed, without arriving at an agreement, many of the political questions of the day. The letter was written on August 8, 1864, from Ragatz, at a time when the heart of patriotic Russians was sore within them on account of the Polish insurrection. Samarin began his letter by a reply to a contribution which had appeared in the *Kolokol* signed by one Martianoff, whose article Samarin regarded as imbued with that moral contagion with which Herzen was infecting hundreds and thousands of Russian youths. Samarin then proceeded to address Herzen as follows :—

“ I repeat to you a second time what I said to you in London : your propaganda has had as fatal an influence over a whole generation as a destructive, unnatural habit which has taken hold of a youthful organism, the latter not yet having had time to mould itself and grow strong. You have dried up its marrow, weakened the whole nervous system, and rendered the generation of which I speak totally unfit for concentration of thought, self-restraint, and energetic action. How could it be otherwise ? You have no ground to stand upon. The virtue of your preaching has evaporated ; the result of many shipwrecks has been that you have not saved one single conviction : there remains nothing but revolutionary processes, nothing but a revolutionary routine, a kind of malady which I can't call by a better name than that of ‘ the revolutionary itch.’ Everything else which leads you still to believe yourself a propagandist—a belief which does not mean a want of candour in yourself, in Alexander Herzen—all this you yourself have long condemned and despised in view of all your disciples. You were among the first to preach materialism in

Russia, and you are a materialist. You wielded it, like a battering-ram, to batter down the family, the Church, and the Empire."

After this arraignment Samarin proceeded to argue elaborately as to the absurdity of blaming anybody for anything if man has no free will, if he has no soul, and if he is not responsible for his actions :—

"By denying the possibility of free will, you give the reins to selfishness, and to all appearance give it full liberty, but in point of fact you do the exact opposite. I mean you make it a slave to the external law of necessity, by which all things are absolutely predestined : the lot of mankind, the movement of the heavenly bodies, the fall of every drop of rain and every momentary impulse, which to all appearance affects the nerves of man without any after consequence. Personality in that sense, in which men have used it hitherto, *i.e.* in the sense of a spirit free and creating from within, loses its centre, and, like a particle of matter, disappears in the wide, wide world. In lieu of personality there remains an indistinguishable medium, in which there takes place the play of elemental forces not subject to its sway. Here there is evidently but one law : the law of strength, and its perpetual triumph over weakness. What was it that led you to conspire against violence and revolt against the shedding of blood ?

"You reject the idea of imputation ; you find yourself at ease and unfettered in the region of complete irresponsibility : well, then, pass your life in it ! But what ground, what right have you to irritate the nerves of the public by playing before it in each number of the *Kolokol* the mystery of the Last

Judgment on the living and the dead, cursing these and blessing those ?

“ You have not even got a middle state, a purgatory, like the Roman Catholic ; you have nothing but martyrs, or executioners and spies. Come now, make a frank confession : you have nothing to do with all this, you have no right whatever to act thus. One can’t scoff at sacred things and sing anthems at one and the same time.

“ You said to me one day that in your daily censures of people who crossed you you had no pretension to *pass judgment* on them, but merely gave way to your personal *taste*, just as when sitting at table, and looking over a bill of fare, you would choose a plate of crabs in preference to mutton. . . .

“ Alexander Ivanovitch, do you not libel your own self ? If you really mean what you say, *can you conscientiously raise your voice against despotism ? What do we understand by this word ‘despotism’ ?* Is it not a subservience to personal taste embracing all that relates to man ? . . . You have no doubt heard that the Russian peasant who emigrates from his native place to distant parts always takes along with him a little bundle containing a handful of his natal earth. For what purpose does he do this ? He does not know himself, but he prizes it, regarding it as something holy. It appears to me that some hand, without your knowledge, added to your mental furniture a little soil gathered up from your deserted home. It is well that it has remained intact, but bear this in mind : a tree which has no root will bear no fruit. That which, so to say, *lives on* unknown to him in a man’s nature, as a reflection of old things which he has disowned, cannot be passed on to others. Only that can be handed on which is

consciously accepted and set down for others' instruction; but in this case there is no conscious acceptance on your part."

After this exordium M. Samarin tells Herzen that he is aware he will take no notice of his arguments, for in London Herzen told him that he had lost all taste for abstract questions of that kind. Two men, of whom the one is conscious of a free will and of responsibility, while the other sees in himself the product of certain chemical combinations, can never resemble one another, either in the family, or in society, or in the state. Samarin might have added that neither of them could ever agree with the other, and that further argument was a waste of time.

Leaving the abstract, he then attempted to bring Herzen to book for his attitude in regard to the Polish insurrection. It is a matter of past history now, but as a specimen of the political atmosphere in which Madame Novikoff passed the most impressionable part of her life, it may not be without instruction to reproduce it here. Nor is it altogether without interest, as it enables the English public to gain some far-away glimpses of the Russian point of view in dealing with the Polish question:—

"In these latter years, two events in Russia stood out in very prominent outline. One of these was the attempt to carry out the senseless programme of certain Russian students who had laid their books aside—one hatched by some unknown individual; I refer to certain 'subterranean' prints (*Land and Liberty*, *Velikoross*, etc.), in which they preached *arson and treason*—papers whereby gross *atheism* was *thievishly ingrafted in the children of either sex*,

entrusted for religious teaching to teachers of Sunday schools, 'subterranean' manifestoes, intended to deceive the peasantry, etc. The Polish insurrection was another prominent event, this and its attributes : the halter for the rascally populace, a poisoned stiletto for Polish editors and Russian officers, and an authoritative lie, paid for at so much the line, to hoodwink Europe in general and win its approval.

"Which side did you take ? You assumed an attitude of reserve. The youths in our colleges and universities had given up learning ; their time was taken up with setting on foot divers secret societies, the organs of a future political agitation, and little by little coming out of their shell, they puzzled the *disconcerted* Government with divers demands, deputations, and demonstrations. You were aware of this. You with your ripe experience, with the great influence which you have over youthful minds, were the person of all others to address them in terms of solemn warning, to point out to them that they were engaged in a hopeless and dangerous enterprise, and to show them the immorality involved in a waste of precious time and strength which should be devoted to their country's good. Instead of this, you acted in their case as you did in that of Martianoff : you added fuel to the flames, and at last you turned their heads by taking their side on those rare occasions on which masters and curators endeavoured to gather up the loosened reins. Polish cunning found abettors in Russian folly and in your own connivance. The pranks I refer to began to assume wider dimensions. Specimens of subterranean literature began to appear—an explanatory text for Petersburg incendiaries, and a preface to subterranean manifestoes. A thrill of displeasure passed through the whole of Russia. It was only those persons who had not lost the hope

of causing a reaction in the Government that secretly rubbed their hands with glee. And you, what did you do? Read your articles on the revolutionary paper called the *Velikoross*, on the conflagrations, etc., and form your own judgment upon them. Our chroniclers relate that when John the Terrible was a child, and amused himself by torturing different little animals, the chamberlains set over him at that time to act the part of governors, although perhaps they were not sympathetic witnesses of this species of amusement, instead of giving him a well-deserved whipping, let him have his own way, and to justify themselves and him kept repeating in an undertone, 'Let the young Prince enjoy himself.' You acted towards the Russian youths like a courtier of John the Terrible.

"As to the mode in which the Polish rising was set on foot, you of all men were the best informed on this point: you could not but know that in the emigration scheme, in its so-called diplomatic acts, in all the leaflets, pamphlets, songs, and hymns which by degrees excited the nerves and troubled the brains of the Polish people, the foremost demand put forth in the name of the ancient rights of Poland involved the enslavement to this country of two other living nationalities, that of Great Russia and that of Little Poland. You must surely have received information of this fact, that instructions had been issued to all leaders and arbitrators in the southern districts of Poland to this effect: that the situation of the 19th of February be turned to account by confiscating as much as possible of the land of peaceable populations, and by overburdening the people with contributions, with a view by such means of provoking the peasantry, in order to necessitate penal measures

which would exasperate the people against the Government. When this system was in vogue, each time the Government attempted to improve the condition of the peasants, the nobility cunningly stopped the way, spreading abroad among the people and in Europe a report to the effect that the 'Moskali' against the wish of the nobles were for perpetuating a condition of serfdom. You must surely have guessed, even supposing you received no letter informing you of this fact, that the promises of grants of land and of reduced taxation on the part of the revolutionary Government were nothing more than a tool for bribing the people; that no one leader of the insurrection, either of the white or red factions, cared two straws about improving their position—a proof of which statement lies in the fact that the secret Government, when prating about the readiness of the nobles for concessions of all kinds, obstinately maintained intact the irresponsible power of the noble over the serf. In fine, the true character of the Polish insurrection—an affair made up exclusively between nobles and Jesuits—was self-evident. What attitude did you take up in view of the Polish outbreak?

"You did not approve of this—I repeat your own words. You did not approve of it! Why, the most implacable enemy of Russia could not have done this, unless he were tipsy or had drunk himself mad! A great merit this! I call to mind the well-known story of a certain watchman whose duty it was to guard a gold mine which a band of robbers slipping by each night were in the habit of robbing. The watchman in question would wrap himself up in his sheep-skin and go to his sentry box, merely mumbling to himself, 'Ay, ay, lads, you will get the worst of it;

you will come to a bad end, mark my words.' I think you did venture to put forward something in justification of the rights of Lithuania and Russia when certain gentlemen, friends of yours, came to you to gladden you with the announcement that they intended to cause a storm to burst over Russia ; but, need it be said, no one viewed the matter in your own light, nobody accepted the correction you made. Your friends maintained that Poland was entitled to the boundaries of the year 1772—in other words, to one-half of Russia ; and the rising broke out without your approval. To tell you the honest truth, it appears to me that the gentlemen who consulted with you made no great point of enlisting your sympathies in this matter. What they needed was not *approval* but co-operation on your part. They knew that you could aid them by taking the libels concocted by them under the ægis of your authority, by throwing mud at people they thought they had reason to fear, by crushing the moral forces of Russia, and by propping up in Russian circles the strange delusion that the aspirations of the Polish noble coincided with those of humanity and freedom. You did not fail to do them this service, and are doing it still to the best of your power. This interview had no sooner taken place than a few Russian officers addressed themselves to their *directeur de conscience*, the editor of the *Kolokol*, and informed him of their intention of deserting to the Poles as soon as hostilities broke out. What did you say to this? You entered upon a friendly correspondence with these persons ; you did not dare to give them a fitting rebuke ; and for some reason it did not occur to you to remind them that a man wearing the Russian uniform, receiving pay and a command

from the Russian Government, who under such circumstances—and that too in time of war—talks of deserting to the Poles, is a spy and an agent of the Polish committee which meets in London under the direction of Mieroslafski¹ and Mazzini.

“The insurrection was played out. They began to assassinate. General Korsakoff was brutally mutilated, and they murdered Minnisleffski, the Secretary of Wielopolski, for writing newspaper articles. They tried to shoot Luders, the Grand Duke Constantine, and Count Berg, Viceroy of Poland; to poison Wielopolski, to cut off Trepoff’s head, not to speak of many others. You knew this. You read in reports from Russian officers that the tossing up in the air of the bodies of the hanged peasants and Russian soldiers with throats ripped open and their skins turned inside out, like the facing of a coat, were features common enough during the pursuit of Polish bands. They organised hordes of hired murderers; the Roman Catholic priests would sprinkle poisoned daggers with holy water, promising to shoot point-blank from a revolver. All this is true. It turns one sick to think of such things. What was your own line of action when this sort of thing was going on? You who abhor terrorism, you who shudder at the very thought of bloodshed, took the side of the oppressors—in other words, owing to some blindness impossible to account for, the side of poisoners and cut-throats, the side of the landowner against the peasant, the side of the noble against the lower classes (contemptuously called ‘Cedlo, cattle’). Whatever the Polish ‘Jond’ and all its horde might please to say, you took no notice; you deliberately winked at everything and

¹ Mieroslafski was the leader of the Democratic section of the revolutionary Poles.

turned away from it, unwilling to see the truth ; you repeated the abominable libels of hired Polish editors, and could not get rid of your displeasure at Mouravieff, who in three short months set up on their feet and gave new life to a whole nation of oppressed people. For this service on your part you received, at some time or other, an address of thanks from the Jesuit Montalembert and others.

“At length, to cap all, the president of the world-wide agency of political murder ventured in your own house to give a toast to the success of the Polish noble scare, *per abusam* named the Polish insurrection, and you did not kick him downstairs. Why did you give way before Russian youths and before the Polish noble ? I will tell you why. Because you reconciled yourself to the idea of revolution as a means which you thought needful for the attainment of political ends. You assumed that one may put up with a short operation, after which the human wound should be closed for ever and men should be in expectation of the advent of a kingdom of endless peace, satisfaction, and freedom. Instead of this, Napoleon III. came to the throne. Positive ends disappeared one after the other, formulas were washed out, convictions shrivelled up and came to nought. Nothing remained but the usual means : revolution whose end is its own self, revolution for revolution’s sake. Its proceedings you knew from sermons by Polish Romanist priests, from subterranean writings, from the *Velikoross*, and you did not dare to disobey its call. As to one enslaved by revolution, to you it made no difference from whence it should take its rise—from the University, from the village, from the Roman Catholic Church,

or from the nobleman's castle. You do not ask of it whither it shall tend and to what impulses its onward course shall give rise. You have come to regard means with utter complacency, and stand on the same level as the Jesuit. You deemed yourself under the necessity of using your influence to bless arson, roguery, and the poisoned knife, or shamefully hanging down your head, pretending you were blind and deaf.

"When we met for the first time, you said to me that if you could feel convinced that your journalistic activity was harmful to Russia you would give it up forthwith. I fully believe you, and had this been said but quite recently, I should have left no stone unturned to dissuade you from it. It is too late to begin now. All the harm you could possibly do to Russia is already done. The mere cessation of your propaganda would do little good now; the harm done needs to be wiped out so far as this could be possible. As to the question how to set about doing this, that would be for you to decide.

"It is time to conclude. I think it never fell to my lot to speak so pitilessly; it is my belief in your candour which has permitted me to full and merciless outspokenness. This you know, that I have no feeling of personal enmity against you—far from it. I did not avail myself of the permission afforded me to censure you in print, and keep in reserve till we meet face to face all that made my heart hot within me. It was not to condemn your opponents, who have attacked you in print, that I did so, but because I held a view different from their own. I cannot get rid of the idea (shared in by Aksakoff) that sooner or later you will bethink yourself.—Sincerely yours,

"GEORGE SAMARIN."

This letter may seem somewhat long, although it has been abridged, but those who wish to penetrate into the mind of Russian patriots will find much help in Samarin's letter. Most of the controversies which distract Russia to-day may be found in germ in this expostulation addressed to Alexander Herzen.

CHAPTER III.

FIRST FLIGHTS. POBÉDONOSTZEFF AND COUNT BEUST.

AMONG the many acquaintances which ripened into friendships made by Madame Olga Novikoff at the Grand Duchess Helena's salon one of the most notable was Count Keyserling, Rector of Dorpat University.

Count Keyserling was a man of the savant type, whose name is associated with those of Sir Roderick Murchison and M. de Verneuil, with whom he travelled in Russia, as one of the authors of a well-known work published by the Royal Geographical Society of London in 1845 on the *Geology of Russia in Europe and the Urals*. He was a scholar, a philosopher, and a sceptic, who first brought free-thinking unbelief into contact with the ardent and enthusiastic faith of his young orthodox friend.

They first met at the Michel Palace, where the spare, spectacled savant found in the young, vivacious woman much to interest him, while the charm of her conversation, her lively interest in his philosophical speculations, pleased the Rector, who was not accustomed to find women with such keen interest in his favourite pursuits. The day after they met, the Count called upon her on his way to the station. He apologised for the brevity of his visit, but begged that before he left town she would give him her photograph.



M. POBÉDONOSTZEFF.
Procurator of the Holy Synod.

"If you really want it," she said, "you shall have it with pleasure. But I shall not believe you care to have it unless on your return to Dorpat you write to ask for it in a fortnight."

Two weeks later came a letter from Count Keyserling reminding her of her promise. She sent the photograph, and thus a correspondence began which lasted two years, until they met again, and was continued many years later, till 1884.

Count Keyserling exercised considerable influence in her mental development. "Nine-tenths of me," she told me thirty years ago, "is Greek Orthodox, the other tenth is sceptic—which I owe to Keyserling." But what she lost in faith she gained in intellectual grit, and in later days, when her faith revived, she still retained the intellectual advantages of her intimacy with the distinguished Curator of Dorpat University.

When Madame Novikoff met him Count Keyserling was a paterfamilias over fifty years old. He was tall and thin, with very refined features. His letters show that he combined the erudition of a scholar with the charm of a man of the world, as capable of turning a pretty compliment as of carrying on a serious controversy.

It was at the Grand Duchess Helena's also that she met the first notable statesman of the many whose letters are found in her correspondence. This was M. Pobédonostzeff, then tutor of the Heir Apparent, and afterwards destined, as Procurator of the Holy Synod, to exercise so potent an influence in the Government of Russia. Like Count Keyserling, M. Pobédonostzeff was tall and spare, a great scholar and a clear thinker. He was an orthodox of the orthodox, an old Russian who believed in the autocracy and who regarded constitutional government as a kind of

Western pestilence from which it was the first duty of a patriot to keep Russia immune. Stern to austerity in his political and religious ideas, rather ruthless in his determination to extirpate the heresies which, coming from the West, threatened to destroy the simple faith of Holy Russia, he was nevertheless a charming man, intimately versed in foreign literature, especially English, although he spoke English with difficulty. He was a pessimist, who saw no hope save in staying the flood of anarchist and revolutionary ideas which in his closing years burst with fury over Russia. He was *ultimus Romanorum*, the melancholy but undaunted incarnation of the *ancien régime*.

M. Pobédonostzeff once had a curious experience, which left a deep impression on his mind. I had the story from his own mouth, and as it is a very remarkable incident, it may as well be inserted here :—

“Very many years ago,” he said, “I rented a country house in the neighbourhood of St. Petersburg. On the first night in the house neither my wife nor I could get a wink of sleep. We had hardly gone to bed when we were startled by the sound of loud and persistent rappings. Believing that some one was knocking, I got up and went to the door. There was no one there. I called the servant and searched the house. Nowhere could be found any one to whom the knocking could be attributed. All was still. I went back to bed. The rappings, loud, heavy, and persistent, recommenced. Again I gave the alarm; again we resumed our search, but all in vain. No one could see where or whence or how the mysterious rappings came. We were glad when morning came and the knockings ceased.

“Next night it was just the same. We were annoyed

and disgusted. It seemed impossible to stay in a house where such noises prevented sleep. We thought of giving up the house, when a friend to whom I mentioned the matter suggested that the sounds might be of ghostly origin, and advised that we should call in the services of a medium. I did not like the notion, but as there was no accounting for the rappings, and apparently no way of stopping them, I consented. The medium came. We held a séance. He went into a trance, and when under control told us that the rappings were caused by the spirit of a priest who had been suddenly called away while in the midst of celebrating mass on the premises, and had died before he had been able to return to complete the sacrifice. On being asked how it was possible to lay the uneasy spirit, the medium, still under control, replied that it could only be done by finding another priest who would complete the service. And then followed the extraordinary part of the story. The medium said that there had been a private chapel in the building, of which I knew nothing. He said that the door had been bricked up but that the chapel still existed, and that ever since the priest had left it the altar and all the sacred vessels remained untouched. 'But,' I replied, 'I know of no such chapel. I do not believe a word of your story.' 'Go down the corridor,' was the reply, 'and so many yards from the door on the right-hand side you will find behind the plaster the bricked-up door of the chapel. Break down the bricks, and you will find the altar with everything betokening the interrupted mass.' It seemed incredible, but the statement was so positive and so precise, and the misery of the nightly knockings so intolerable, I determined to make the search. To our immense surprise, we found everything exactly as the

medium had said. We broke down the bricked-up wall, and there was the chapel, in the chapel an altar, and on the altar the evidence of an interrupted service. I summoned a priest, who completed the ceremony; and from that day until we left the house we were never again troubled by these mysterious rappings. I have never been able to conceive any explanation of it satisfactory to my mind. But I have told you the facts as they actually occurred."

M. Pobédonostzeff was a good friend to Madame Novikoff. She paid a glowing tribute to his memory in the preface which she contributed to the English translation of the *Reflections of a Russian Statesman*. The character of the late Procurator-General of the Holy Synod is so little understood or appreciated in the West that it may not be inappropriate to make the following extract from this preface :—

"Several years ago, Mr. Kinglake, the author of the *Crimean War*, whom we, his friends, generally called 'Eothen,' wrote to me suggesting that I should make a study of the decay of parliamentarism. Here is a part of his letter :—

"'Now I am going "to set you a subject," as your governess would have said in the days of the school-room.

"'I think it might suit your position to write on the "Fall of Parliamentary Government." You would please Moscow, please Petersburg, please your Emperor, and though not exactly pleasing England, you would win her attention, and perhaps put her on her mettle, and teach her to mend her ways. Let me know what you think of this, and if I hear that you incline to the subject, I will revert to it.'

"Mr. Froude urged me to do the same, but the task to which I was invited was far beyond my power. Besides, I should only have to repeat what was so much better said by Carlyle, Sir Henry Maine, Mr. Lecky, and others. But that difficult duty was taken by a Russian, who possesses all the scientific qualifications for such an examination—M. Pobédonostzeff.

"In securing its appearance in the present form, I feel as if I were in some measure, though vicariously, carrying out the wish of my two departed friends, Kinglake and Froude. . . .

"Upon the greatest problems it is not necessary for me to say more than a single word.

"That word is his name, a name familiar throughout Europe. It stands for religion as opposed to atheism, for Orthodoxy as opposed to Romanism on one hand and Protestantism on the other, and for authority as opposed to anarchy.

"In him all the irreligious forces of modern nihilism, as well as the theological quacks with their sham remedies for the ills of the soul, have long recognised the supreme embodiment of all the principles against which they wage unceasing war.

"It is not his habit to descend into the arena. For the most part of his long and remarkable career he has been a silent witness, working, not talking; serving his Emperor and his country in the sphere to which he has been called.

"As tutor to our late Emperor, he had much to do with implanting in the heart and soul of Alexander III. those profound religious convictions which made him afterwards so famous as the man who, in his private life and in his policy, was dominated by an almost fanatical hatred of lies and who earned for himself the noble title of the Peacekeeper of

Europe by his not less passionate detestation of war.

“ To train a pupil who, on the greatest of Imperial thrones, should never forget to hate a lie, and to regard as his most coveted ambition to keep the peace—that was the first merit of M. Pobédonostzeff. . . .

“ But after fulfilling the duty of tutorship to the Grand Duke, who at the much-lamented death of his beloved brother became the heir to the throne, M. Pobédonostzeff was called to a post of great difficulty and importance, that of Procurator of the Holy Synod. . . .

“ Even his worst enemies will not deny that during the whole of his life M. Pobédonostzeff has never even been accused of acting on other than the loftiest political and religious principles. He certainly has carried out his convictions with honest pertinacity. He is not a man of compromise; he is a man of principle, and he has been true to his convictions.

“ M. Pobédonostzeff, by his deep learning and his lofty character, has secured for himself one of the highest positions in an Empire which even the blindest now begin to see is the dominating power in Europe and Asia. He is not afraid of speaking his mind freely to his Emperor, and he is just as unbiased in appealing to the masses of his readers.

“ M. Pobédonostzeff is the critic in the stalls. To him, as to all of us Russians, the parliamentary theatre of the Western World performs a long tragic-comedy, which occasionally ascends to tragedy and sometimes sinks into farce. We can observe it dispassionately, critically, and sometimes even sympathetically.

“ However you may deplore the fact, we are outside



COUNT BEUST.
Chancellor of Austria-Hungary, 1867-1871.

of it, and have never shown less disposition than to-day to enroll ourselves in the democratic troupe. . . .

"I may remind those who protest against giving a hearing to an advocate of autocracy that Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, even in the sixty-first year of her reign, has not deemed it expedient, or even possible, to govern more than a mere fraction of her subjects on democratic principles. The government of three-fourths of the British Empire is as autocratic and as free from the *chinoiseries* of representative government as the government of Russia itself.

"*April 1898.*"

Another Russian statesman of the first rank but of a still older generation was Prince Gortschakoff,¹ for many years Chancellor of the Empire and the best-known of all the foreign ministers of Russia. He was always very civil to Madame Novikoff, but their relations were not so close as those with M. Pobédonostzeff. The old Prince was not enough Slavophile for her!

From ambassadors to prime ministers is an easy transition. The first Prime Minister among the friends of Madame Novikoff was Count Beust, the Saxon statesman who, after the Austrians had been thrust out of the German Confederation, was entrusted by the Emperor Francis Joseph with the task of rebuilding the shattered fortunes of the empire-kingdom. I quote from a letter of Madame Novikoff's the following account of their first meeting:—

¹ Prince Alexander Michaelovitch Gortschakoff, born 1798, died 1883. Succeeded Nesselrode in 1856 as Minister for Foreign Affairs. Appointed Chancellor of the Empire 1863. His last public act of importance was the signature of the Berlin Treaty in 1878. He was succeeded at the Foreign Office by M. de Giers in 1882.

“ I was spending a whole year with my brother-in-law and his wife at the Russian Embassy at Vienna. It was a very worldly life I led there, going twice a week to the opera and the Burg Theatre, receiving visitors in our boxes, and no end of dinner and other parties. At a large banquet given by the Turkish Ambassador, Khalil Pasha, my old friend from St. Petersburg, I was taken to dinner by Count Beust, who at that time was the Chancellor of the Austrian Empire.

“ He was very talkative, full of fun and anecdotes, and as I was fonder of listening and forming my judgment than of talking and expressing my views, I was well satisfied with my companion.

“ He evidently liked a good listener, because the next day he called on me, stayed a long time, and on leaving dropped in my hand the following verses :—

“ ‘ L’Autriche, dit on, et la Russie,
Se brouillent pour la Turquie,
Dès aujourd’hui il n’en est plus question ;
En invitant une femme charmante,
Le Turc (que je l’en complimente !)
Est devenu pour nous un trait d’union.’ ”

“ I thanked the Count, put the paper in my pocket, and very soon, naturally, forgot all about it. But I was not destined to lose sight of it altogether : this insignificant incident had rather inconvenient consequences—almost a quarrel between me and my brother-in-law. A few days after the Count Beust’s visit the Ambassador rushed into my room, hardly giving me time to answer his knock. ‘ Olga, Olga, what have you been doing ? ’ ‘ I am just finishing a letter to my husband,’ I replied. ‘ How can you be so tactless ? How can you put me, a Russian Ambassador, in an awkward position which may

spoil my intercourse with the Chancellor of the country to which I am appointed?' It was now my turn to exclaim. 'But what is the matter? What has happened? What on earth have I done?' 'Done, what have you done with Beust?' continued my irate brother-in-law. 'Dined with him at the Turkish Embassy.' 'Good heavens, are you determined not to answer properly? Did not the Chancellor call on you the day before yesterday and leave you some verses?' 'Well, now I understand,' said I. 'Yes, he did; but I did not know he wanted me to boast of it.'

"Novikoff seemed quite indignant. 'Done,' he exclaimed, 'why, you have almost compromised me. You never said that the Chancellor called here. You must know that he never makes calls; he is very particular about that. His visit was an exceptional demonstration to the Russian Embassy! Not content with that omission, you never even mentioned to me his verses, you never showed them to me. It is simply unpardonable. I went to see the Chancellor this morning, and the first thing he asked,' continued my brother-in-law, 'was, "What did I think of his impromptu?"' "What impromptu?" I asked, naturally astonished. "Well, it is something I wrote for your sister-in-law. I thought she would show it to you. I called at the Embassy and left my impressions of our Turkish banquet." I did not know what to say. The Count Beust was evidently hurt. He is vanity itself. You might have guessed that after a whole dinner's intercourse,' remarked Novikoff bitterly. I pleaded guilty, but my only fault was that I did not talk about his compliments. I had to confess my mistake. Count Beust evidently did not want his verses to remain unknown. He not only

recited but even distributed them among several people.”¹

It is possible sometimes to be too modest. Madame Novikoff's innate horror of boasting led her on this occasion to convert what was meant to be a political demonstration into a personal compliment, and therefore—not worth mentioning! It is often difficult to know when discretion becomes indiscretion.

I remember an incident in which Madame Novi-

¹ “In 1871 Madame Olga Novikoff made a lengthened sojourn with her brother-in-law at the Russian Embassy in Vienna, and her activity inclining her to take part in political conversation, she insensibly became familiarised with the current business of diplomacy. But she also did what was a thousand times more important, for she formed a friendship—a friendship which has never since waned—with Count Beust, the then Prime Minister of the Dual Empire; and although it may be only a coincidence, it is a fact that so long as she remained at the Austrian capital there was an unwonted cordiality between the Cabinets of St. Petersburg and Vienna.”—*Quarterly Review*, January 1880, p. 521.

Count Beust liked writing rhymes. In 1872 he gave Madame Novikoff the following verses:—

“C'est sur les ruines de la superbe Carthage
Que Marius se trouvait fièrement assis.
De Marius le sort—je le partage,
Mais il me manque une ville démolie.
Et comme on veut que je sois sage,
Un vieux tronc d'arbre me suffit.
Et c'est au reste le même adage
D'une éternelle symphonie:
Chacun recoit son appanage—
Tel que lui-même il fait son lit.”

In 1876, when Abdul Aziz was scissored to death, Count Beust wrote the following quatrain upon the dead Sultan:—

ABDUL AZIZ

“Honneur à sa mémoire! Son trépas fut beau,
Car il est mort en grand seigneur,
Et si on lui a donné des ciseaux,
C'est qu'on voulait qu'il fut ailleurs!”



GEN. ALEXANDER KIRÉEFF.

koff's brother inadvertently secured for me a reputation for discretion which I did not deserve. General Kiréeff kindly interpreted for me in 1888, when I was received by M. de Giers, then Foreign Minister of Russia at St. Petersburg. The General did his interpreting like a patent condenser, and translated M. de Giers' remarks with brevity and dispatch, omitting compliments and impressing upon me the extreme importance of preserving silence as to what passed at the interview.

Leaving the Foreign Office, I reported, as in duty bound, to Sir Robert Morier the fact of the interview, remarking that General Kiréeff had charged me not to repeat the minister's words. A few hours afterwards M. de Giers called at the Embassy, and hearing that I had been there, remarked, "I hope Stead repeated to you what I said about your Excellency?"

"Indeed, he did not," said Sir Robert Morier. "He said he had been charged to be silent."

"Oh," said M. de Giers, somewhat aggrieved, "then he did not tell you that I said that as long as your Excellency remained at St. Petersburg there was no danger of any trouble in the relations between England and Russia."

"I thank your Excellency," said Morier, "but Stead never told me you had mentioned my name. Stead *est capable de tout, même d'être discret.*"

The Ambassador's bon mot was of good service to me in St. Petersburg, but I had no right to the flattering certificate for discretion. General Kiréeff, with his dislike of fine phrases, had never translated M. de Giers' compliment to the Ambassador, which it was the minister's obvious intention should be repeated to Sir Robert Morier.

Count Beust remained a fast friend to Madame

Novikoff. He was Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at London in the critical years when the Eastern Question convulsed Europe, and Madame Novikoff as M.P. for Russia was labouring night and day to secure the support of England and Austria for her beloved Slavs.

There are several letters from Count Beust addressed to "*Chère et excellentissime Madame de Novikoff*," and signed "*mille hommages, votre toujours dévoué, Beust*," but the rest are for the most part brief notes conveying invitations to dinner, apologies and regrets for his inability to meet her, regrets for her absence, and the like. The longer letters are almost indecipherable. The Count's caligraphy was as illegible as Dean Stanley's. When I complained, Madame Novikoff replied, "*Oh, no one can read them. They are meant to be read by the heart, not with the eye.*" Here is a brief extract from a letter of his summarising a parliamentary discussion on the question of Khiva:—

"*L'Angleterre emploiera son ascendant moral pour contenir l'Afghanistan, mais n'en répond pas. La Russie a déclaré ne pas vouloir annexer Khiva mais ne renonce pas de le faire. Les voila d'accord.*

"*Au fait, cela revient a ce que dit l'Evangile, l'intention est bonne, mais la chair est faible. Seulement chez les Russes elle ne les empêche pas eux de faire ce qui leur plait, tandis que chez les Anglais elle n'empêche pas les autres de faire ce qui plait à ceux la.*"

Here is another dated December 31, 1875. It is more legible than the rest:—

"*DEAR AND EXCELLENT MADAME NOVIKOFF,—*
From what you have told me concerning the swiftness

of your movements, I cannot hope that these lines will get ahead of you, but they will at any rate follow you closely, to tell you how deeply I was moved by the few words of farewell which you left me, which in my heart, so sincerely devoted to my rare true friends, awake a most faithful echo.

“Ever since you left I have been living the life of an anchorite. In other words, I have been suffering from bronchitis. My cough was at one time so violent that I really began to get alarmed. Seclusion and the doctor’s orders that I was to see nobody have had a salutary effect, and I am being born anew to the hope of living for the satisfaction of my friends and the disappointment of the others. The famous ‘note’ [the famous Andrassy Note on the Bosnian insurrection] travelleth continually but arriveth not. ‘She’ must be enjoying herself on the way, and no wonder, she has so much to embrace. One thing is certain, she is dividing her affections (she is very promiscuous in her affections), the young jade, for she ceaselessly passes from one to another.

“Adieu! I can’t wish you a Happy New Year, for you’re not there yet. To compensate for that, though, you can congratulate me on YOUR New Year’s Day, for that is my birthday. One may do what one pleases, but I cannot help it; I always was a Russian in my heart of hearts, even in my cradle days—to say nothing of still earlier times.—Sincerely yours,
BEUST.”

I met Count Beust at Madame Novikoff’s salon in Brook Street in 1877. He was old and withered but full of interest and animation. Although he seemed very devoted to Madame Novikoff, and as

friendly as possible to the cause of the Slavs, it was probably only to her that he would have declared "j'étais toujours Russe dans l'âme même au berceau." But that was one of the advantages of being Madame Novikoff. She made every one "Russe dans l'âme," and anxious to imagine that they had been born Russian in some previous incarnation.

Another letter of Count Beust's of a somewhat earlier date:—

"ALTENBERG, 15 *Août* 1875.

"BIEN CHÈRE MADAME,—Que puis-je vous dire d'Arnim et de Bismark ? Je vis à la campagne dans la plus profonde retraite, ne voyant personne, fuyant l'ingrate Vienne. Tout ce que je puis vous dire c'est que je sais un gré infini, à ces deux messieurs de s'être brouillés mortellement ; au moins voila les journaux moins ennuyeux que d'ordinaire.

"Vous chère Madame Novikoff, vous pouvez me dire plus de choses intéressantes de Londres, que je ne puis le faire d'ici. J'espère qu'on ne vous a pas dit trop de mal de moi et que vous me gardez votre bonne amitié.—Mille et mille hommages,

"BEUST."



LORD NAPIER AND ETTRICK.
British Ambassador in Russia, 1860-1864.

CHAPTER IV.

POLAND : AND LORD NAPIER AND ETTRICK.

MADAME NOVIKOFF had hardly weaned her little Sasha when she began to develop what may be regarded as the primeval germ of the salon which was afterwards to become so famous when it was transferred to Claridge's Hotel. Then, as in later years, it was a natural growth, due to the attraction which youth, wit, and a keen but sympathetic intelligence exercised upon men of books and of affairs. As in London in the later seventies Kinglake, Count Beust, Froude, and Villiers used to make a habit of dropping in almost daily to enjoy the pleasant and invigorating stimulus of her society, so in St. Petersburg Lord Napier and Ettrick the British Ambassador, Khalil Pasha the Turkish Ambassador, Count Keyserling of Dorpat whenever he was in town, and many others, used to spend an hour or two in her presence, in company with the brilliant musicians, men of letters, and other habitués of her drawing-room.

It was significant that her first constant visitors were the ambassadors of Great Britain and of Turkey. Khalil Pasha was a very brilliant and amusing man, in whom the aboriginal Ottoman was but imperfectly disguised by a Parisian veneer. He was almost the only Turk with whom Madame Novikoff made personal acquaintance until long after the war of 1877, when

she struck up a curious semi-political alliance with Ismail Pasha, at one time Khedive of Egypt. Even in those early days she possessed the extraordinary flair or intuitive instinct whereby she divined the existence of talent hitherto unsuspected even by its owner.

Madame Novikoff does not remember the incident, episode, or conversation that first turned her thoughts towards the relations between Russia and England. Her starting-point is always the death of her brother Nicholas, which took place in 1876. But as in the case of other sudden conversions, it is often discovered on investigation, the dramatic *volte face* had been preceded by a long, invisible course of preparation of which often the subject was completely unconscious. When the iceberg capsizes every one notices the occurrence, but no notice is taken of the slow, unceasing influence of the warm sea water, which by melting the submerged ice destroys the equilibrium of the berg.

As has been mentioned, the atmosphere of her home was Anglo-Russian. But it was not until after she married that she was brought into close touch with influences calculated to predispose her to the finding of her future mission. In her teens Miss Olga Kiréeff was Russian rather than Anglo-Russian. Towards England she had the repugnance common among many foreigners who regard the exile of Napoleon and Hudson Lowe's cruelty to his prisoner as typical of British perfidy and who have formed their conceptions of English character from the English ostracism of Lord Byron. The first keen interest which she took in international politics was roused by a question which threatened to involve Russia in war with England, and it is as characteristic as it is unexpected to find that Madame Novikoff made her

début as a vehement advocate of a policy which her husband among other people believed would infallibly result in war. As a matter of fact, that policy did not result in war, because England gave way. The memory of that crisis, when war was averted by refusing rather than by granting concessions, probably influenced the whole course of her unofficial diplomacy.

(The first of the four occasions when England and Russia have approached to the verge of war in the last half-century was that in which Lord Palmerston and Lord Russell, with the aid of the Emperor Napoleon, endeavoured to intervene in the Polish question. It is a welcome illustration of the progress the British public has made since 1863 that not even the maddest of political March hares would to-day listen for a moment to the arguments which then convinced British statesmen that it was their right and duty to intervene on behalf of the Polish insurgents.) But in 1863 Lord Palmerston was Prime Minister; the memories of the Crimean War were still fresh in the popular mind; Louis Napoleon was restless; and Queen Victoria was almost the only influential person in the three kingdoms who realised the significance of Bismarck, whose menacing personality was but beginning to rise like a fiery planet upon the Eastern horizon.

To understand how the Russians felt about the threatened intervention it is only necessary to ask how the British would feel about a threatened German intervention on behalf of Ireland. “The Poles,” as Prince Albert once remarked, “are the Irish of the Continent”—Irish with this difference, that they are parcelled out among three empires, whereas the Irish have only one conqueror. Of the three despoilers of Poland, Russia alone desired to preserve the memory

of its ancient kingdom. It was due in part to the opposition of British statesmanship that the aspirations of the Poles for Home Rule were not realised at the Congress of Vienna. Alexander the First, who after Napoleon ranks highest among all those who sat on thrones during the nineteenth century, proposed to reconstitute the Polish kingdom, but was thwarted by England acting as the catpaw of Austria and Prussia.¹

(The desire of the Russian Tsars to conciliate the Poles found once more expression in the reign of Alexander II. when the Grand Duke Constantine, the Emperor's brother, was sent to Warsaw to arrange for the proclamation of a Constitution). Madame Novikoff was personally interested in the success of the mission, for her brother, Alexander Kiréeff, was on the staff of the Grand Duke. It was the moment when the

¹ Addressing the Marquis of Londonderry on August 31, 1831, on the discussions which took place between the Powers in 1814-15, the Duke of Wellington wrote as follows:—

"I think the principal subject of the discussion between Lord Castlereagh and the Emperor Alexander, who was then in a liberal mood, was the desire of the latter to constitute a kingdom of Poland, by adding to the provinces which had formed the Duchy of Warsaw the Polish provinces acquired by Russia by different treaties of partition, of which kingdom the Emperor of Russia was to be King. The scheme created great alarm in the courts of Austria and Prussia, who felt that their Polish provinces would be but insecure possessions if it were adopted, and *your brother took up the cause for them*. The affair ended by the partial adoption of the plan; that is to say, the Emperor became the King of Poland, consisting of those provinces which had constituted the Duchy of Warsaw with the exception of certain cessions to Prussia and Austria respectively. The Emperor reserved to himself the right of increasing the kingdom of Poland by adding thereto such Russo-Polish provinces as he might think proper, and he stipulated for a national Government for the Poles, not only by the King of Poland—that was himself—but by the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia. Russia is the one of three Governments which has executed this last-mentioned article of the Treaty of Vienna with most strictness."—*Wellington Dispatches*, vol. vii. p. 509.

Liberal current in Russia had reached high-water mark. To the emancipation of the serfs there was now to be added the reconciliation of the Poles. We can understand the mood of St. Petersburg if we recall the high hopes and generous illusions which led Lord Frederick Cavendish to proceed to Dublin twenty years later, to inaugurate an era of peace and conciliation after the downfall of the coercionist régime of Mr. Forster. As Lord Frederick Cavendish was brutally murdered, so the Grand Duke Constantine and the Marquis Wielopolski, a Polish patriot who had rallied to the support of the Grand Duke, narrowly escaped assassination.¹

(The irreconcilables, instead of welcoming the message of peace, broke out into armed insurrection. The tide that had been flowing in the direction of liberalism and concession began to ebb, and the Russian Government with set lips and heavy heart addressed itself to the hateful task of repressing an insurrection in a land which it had proposed to endow with larger liberties)

(It can easily be imagined with what chagrin and indignation Madame Novikoff received from her brother the news of the failure of the mission of Polish conciliation. But all irritation against the Poles was cast into the shade when it was discovered that the French Emperor, to whose ambitions Russia chiefly owed the disaster of the Crimean War, was casting about to find in Poland an opportunity to head another coalition against Russia, and that the English

¹ The Grand Duke Constantine was appointed Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom of Poland June 8, 1862. On July 3 an attempt was made to assassinate him. In August, on the 7th and on the 15th, two attempts, fortunately unsuccessful, were made to assassinate Marquis Wielopolski, who was chief of the civil administration of the kingdom.

Government was displaying considerable sympathy with his designs.)

The first actual bloodshed in Poland took place in January 1863. The last of the insurgent bands was crushed in November. Between the two dates Russia had passed through a memorable crisis, which permanently influenced her future development. At home Russian opinion rallied unanimously round the Government in trampling out armed insurrection within its frontiers and in resisting all attempts at intervention from abroad. France and England secured the support of Austria. Russia bought the support of Prussia,¹ paying the price hereafter in 1870-71, and then calmly, and not over-courteously, intimated that the would-be meddlers might do their worst.)

For a time there seemed to be imminent peril of war. It was in this stormy period that Madame Novikoff first began to take an interest in international politics, to which she was introduced under the invaluable tutorship of Lord Napier and Ettrick, who in those days was British Ambassador at St. Petersburg. Lord Napier and Ettrick, at the time when the Polish insurrection broke out, had been three years at St. Petersburg. He was a man of Scotch common sense and cosmopolitan experience. He was not brilliant, but he was judicious and level-headed. Entering the diplomatic service at the age of twenty-one, he had served in Vienna, Teheran, Constantinople, Washington, and The Hague before he was appointed Ambassador at St. Petersburg at the early age of forty-one.

Madame Novikoff and he were on terms of friendship before the Polish trouble arose, and when the

¹ Russo-Prussian Convention, February 1863.



MADAME NOVIKOFF AND HER BROTHERS (1864).

situation became strained in 1863 their relations naturally became more intimate as the subject to be discussed was more interesting. They were continually meeting in society in St. Petersburg and in Peterhof. Madame Novikoff at that time had not even dreamed of playing any rôle in international politics. But she was young, enthusiastic, passionately patriotic, and, as has already been stated, her eldest brother was attached to the staff of the Grand Duke Constantine, Lieutenant-General of Poland. Lord Napier and Ettrick, keen and sympathetic, was the first distinguished British diplomatist to discover the charm and intelligence of the young Russian lady with whom he delighted to discuss the ever-varying phases of the situation. As they met so frequently, his voluminous correspondence consists chiefly of invitations, acceptances, or apologies for absence. But now and then we come upon letters which help to illuminate the diplomatic situation.

Before quoting, however, it may be well to recall for a moment the state of public opinion that prevailed at that time in London. Writing to Madame Novikoff a dozen years later concerning the point of view from which the English approached the Polish question, Mr. E. A. Freeman sent her the following friendly warning on November 10, 1876:—

“In writing for English people, even friendly English people, you must be on your guard about Poland. It is your weak side, as Ireland and Jamaica—Ireland in times past, Jamaica the other day—are ours. Popular belief jumbles everything from 1772 to 1863 in one lump, and does not know that Poles once occupied Moscow. I, who believe myself to

know at least the outlines of the story, say that Russia was, I do not say guiltless, but less guilty than Prussia or Austria in the three partitions *as a whole*. It is the Polish kingdom of 1815 which set all wrong. It was a whim, a craze, a dodge, which *could* not work. Of course it broke down. Alike in 1831 and in 1863 I neither blame the Poles for revolting nor Russia for putting down the revolt. Each side acted as I or anybody else would have done in the same case. The only question is, Did either side do perhaps things which it ought not to have done? Things which are not necessarily implied either in revolting or in putting down a revolt? And in estimating such doings on either side, we should remember that either to revolt or to put down a revolt is another business from an ordinary war between two Powers. I should not approve but excuse things on both sides which I should not excuse, say, in the war between France and Germany. Am I not pretty impartial?"

Writing two years later, December 6, 1878, Mr. Freeman reverted to the same theme:—

"You may make something of Poland some day, because it joins on. We shall never make anything of Ireland, because it does not join on. Remember that the people who shout about Poland have no notion of the difference between the Poland of 1772 and the Poland of 1815. They do not know that Prussia and Austria ever had anything to do with it."

"Have you, as a Russian, courage to say, 'Tories, Jingoese, Good Society, all the rest of you, when we were wrong you backed us up. When we were right you reviled us. As long as you thought that we were the worst thing to be had you went in for us. As soon as you found out that there was a worse

thing you turned against us, and went in for that worse thing.' That is literally true. Of course *I* do not mean that Russia is really the worst thing but one. You are a nation, and can reform what is amiss in you ; you have begun to do so. But the Austrian imposture cannot reform ; it can only be split in pieces."

Writing in the year 1864 on the occasion of the transfer of Lord Napier from St. Petersburg to Berlin, the *Times* set forth as follows what in those days was considered adequate justification for a threatened intervention in the Polish question :—

"The gloomy history of the Polish rebellion almost repels a retrospect. The opinion of the world has been long formed on the series of acts by which an independent country was overrun and parcelled out between alien conquerors. Three generations of statesmen have denounced these deeds of violence, and never during the memory of the oldest among us have good men and prudent men ceased to regret them as disgraceful in themselves and fraught with danger for the future of Europe. It was with these ideas that we judged the late rising in Russian Poland. Whatever may have been its immediate causes, however local and partial may have been its operation, however hopeless its objects, we could not but see in it the effort of oppressed and ill-used men to gain their liberty. The duty of sympathy with a struggle for national independence is irrespective of the chances of success. This country learnt that a cruel conscription had been still more cruelly perverted to the purpose of ridding the Warsaw Government of political opponents, and that a part of the people had in desperation risen in arms. All the miseries and

tyranny of an age were revived in our recollection, and our Government would have ill represented the nation if it had failed to urge upon the Russian Emperor the respect of treaties which secured to Poland, as far as public law could secure it, the right to an honest and constitutional administration. That these feelings were shared by the French Emperor and people, and even in some degree by the Austrian Court, is sufficient proof of their legitimacy. On the moral question there could be no doubt. The verdict of every free people and the combined remonstrances of most of the European Governments proclaimed that such a policy as Russia pursued in her conquered territory was a wrong to humanity.”¹

It must be admitted that when such sentiments dominated the Cabinet of St. James's the task of a British Ambassador at St. Petersburg was not an easy one. The position of British Ambassador to Russia seldom is a bed of roses. This is not because of the contrariness of the Russians, but because the Ambassador who knows the facts and who is on the spot is almost always more or less in antagonism to the uninstructed prejudices which sway the Cabinet from whom he receives his instructions. Lord Napier was growled at for what was regarded as his undue leniency to the Government to which he was accredited. Our Jingoës have made similar complaints of nearly every British Ambassador who has represented England at St. Petersburg since the Crimean War. But, when the controversy was over, Lord Napier was rewarded by the expression of the confidence of British residents in Russia, who presented him with an address in which they declared that “during a period

¹ *The Times*, Nov. 19, 1864.

fraught with danger to the diplomatic relations between the two countries, you have been able to distinguish between truth and fiction, and whilst faithfully reporting the deplorable events of the last two years, you have materially contributed to the maintenance of that peace which is so essential to the interests of the two nations and to our own particular welfare."

The address concluded by "recognising the undisturbed impartiality which you brought to bear in performing it, and of appreciating the qualities which have enabled you to retain the respect and good feeling of all classes of society in Russia, as well as the approval of our Sovereign."

It was good for Madame Novikoff that she should have had so early an opportunity of seeing the bellicose tendencies of the British mob and of British politicians baffled by the cool common sense and sturdy independence of a British Ambassador. It was the first time, but by no means the last, that Madame Novikoff was to learn that the best and wisest patriots of Britain consider that on some occasions the best service they can render to their Government is to offer the strongest possible opposition to its policy when that policy is unjust.

Lord Napier had a bad habit of dating his letters by the days of the week and of having them delivered by hand. Without even so much as a postmark as a guide, it is not easy to say exactly when the following letters were written.

The first dispatch of Lord John Russell was dated March 2, 1863, following on the heels of a French dispatch of the previous month. "Why does not His Imperial Majesty," queried the English Foreign Secretary, "put an end at once to this bloody conflict

by" proclaiming an immediate and unconditional amnesty, at the same time establishing a national administration? This, "in all probability," would content the Poles and satisfy European opinion. Prince Gortschakoff received all the representations from the Great Powers to that effect. But when small countries thought it necessary also to interfere on behalf of Poland, they were slightly snubbed by the Prince. Thus, for instance, when the Portuguese Minister, rather hesitating and embarrassed, presented him with a Note, the Prince smilingly said: "I'll discuss this with your wife this evening."

Chafing at the indifference with which Russia treated their remonstrances, Lord John Russell and Louis Napoleon determined on a further step. On June 17 Lord John dispatched to Lord Napier the text of a Note on the Polish question in which England, France, and Austria concurred.¹

Lord Napier writes to Madame Novikoff about this dispatch:—

"You have heard of the proposals of the three Governments. Six points: 1. Amnesty; 2. Parliament; 3. National administration; 4. Polish language; 5. Liberty of religion; 6. Regular system of recruiting. These six points do not offer any great difficulty. They do not essentially differ from what the Emperor has already promised more than once to Poland. Indeed, a great part of them are already granted in a far greater measure than most people in Western Europe are aware of. There are, besides the six points, over-

¹ Those interested in this ancient controversy will find the official dispatches quoted in full in *The Russian Government in Poland, with a Narrative of the Polish Insurrection of 1863*, by W. A. Day. London, 1867.

tures for a suspension of hostilities and a Conference. But there is no ultimatum. All is still open to negotiation and compromise, and I think public feeling in England is very favourable to peace. . . . So much for your questions 'about politics.'

Another undated letter reports the arrival of the various Notes from France, Austria, and Great Britain:—

"My last Note came last night, and I intended to have written to you to-day to inform you of the position in which we now find ourselves. The French Note arrived a week ago, the Austrian Note came the day before yesterday, ours lingered. None have as yet been presented. Prince Gortschakoff will probably receive us on Wednesday. Of these Notes the longest is the French, the shortest is the Austrian, and the calmest is the English. They are all rather severe, perhaps more so than the Russian Government deserves; but the Russian Government deserves some severity, and will deserve a great deal more if it does not avail itself of its last chance to preserve peace and conciliate Poland. By the tenor of these Notes I understand that the allied Powers do not intend to prolong the correspondence any further for the present, and that for some months to come the Russian Government will have time to reduce and pacify the kingdom. There is not the least danger of hostilities or a rupture during the present year, in my opinion. If during the autumn and winter the insurrection is not appeased or subdued, the intervention will begin again in spring, and will probably take a more formidable character."

(The situation was very strained. Russian patriots raged angrily at the "insolence" of England and France.)

Madame Novikoff, to judge from another undated letter of the period, was certain there would be war, and preferred war to the disgrace of allowing foreign Governments to mix in "our affairs." The cool-headed Scot at the Embassy on the Neva was not so sure as was his impulsive correspondent. He wrote :—

"There is no war yet. I wonder you are so sure of it. Your husband came the other day, and I was not, to my great regret, at home. He too was altogether warlike. You have been consulting the prophets of evil, or you have been living in the atmosphere of courtiers and aide-de-camps. The answers to the three dispatches are not gone yet. They will go on Wednesday morning, I believe; and I have reason to hope, though I have not seen them, that they are of a very conciliatory character. Of course even in a material point of view, for the sake of your *preparations*, you do not wish to precipitate anything. I believe that your Government will make all the concessions which can be made with decency and honour. I still hope that when the crisis arrives there will be in England a great parliamentary demonstration in favour of peace, which will give the Government the means of stopping on their career towards a rupture; and when England stops, France will have an opportunity of stopping too."

It is interesting to note this hint of the possibility of placing a parliamentary brake upon a Ministry drifting towards war, a hint which fell like good seed on fertile soil, to bear harvest the original sower recked not of.

Lord Napier evidently found much comfort in confiding his troubles, his disappointments, his hopes, and his fears to Madame Novikoff's sympathetic

ears. In a letter written apparently at the end of July the Ambassador wrote :—

“ *Tuesday* (undated).

“ How strange the People are ! I have laboured sincerely and reasonably with application and argument to show the falseness and hollowness of Polish pretensions and to defend the Russian Government where I think it can be with justice defended, blaming it temperately where I think it is wrong ; and I reaped nothing but incredulity ! Now, because in a dispatch from Russell it appears that I sent home an extract from the *Journal de St. Petersbourg* they turn round and salute me as a friend. I am glad to be saluted as a friend ; I wish I could flatter myself so to remain. But now Prince Gortschakoff has rendered the task of diplomacy doubly difficult. He has given us the strangest answer in the world. He accepts the six points and the *principle* of a Conference, but he limits the Conference to the *three* Powers, Austria, Russia, and Prussia, and excludes England and France. An answer more galling to French vanity and more discouraging to the friends of peace in England could hardly have been devised. I am, however, endeavouring to soften the effect. It does not appear that either Austria or Prussia were consulted before this proposal was produced. I do not, however, lose all hope. I will go on to the end.”

Prince Gortschakoff's reply was dated July 1. He declined to discuss the six points in detail. “ If Lord John Russell,” he wrote with polite sarcasm, “ were exactly informed of what passes in the kingdom of Poland he would know, as we do, many things into which it is unnecessary to enter here. Nothing short of unconditional surrender would be compatible with

the dignity of our august master and with the sentiments of the Russian nation."

Not even the most ardent Muscovite could have desired any more uncompromising defiance. For a moment there was a stillness as of death. Would England fight ?

Lord Napier hoped not. Russia also hoped not, but made preparations for eventualities. Mr. Horsman gave notice of a resolution in the House of Commons intended to pave the way for war. Fortunately, the Queen's influence, and the representations of Lord Napier, the gathering storm in Schleswig-Holstein, and the certain opposition of Cobden and Bright and their friends to any war with Russia, led Lord Palmerston to see that there was nothing to be done but to "take it lying down." This he did, to the profound satisfaction of all rational men. Even the *Times*, twelve months after the danger was over, could see the idiocy of the proposed intervention. Writing on Lord Napier's action in the Polish crisis, the *Times* said :—

"It was a matter of nothing less than peace or war—war with the same Power for the second time within a period of seven years, and in a quarrel which only concerned us so far as every nation is concerned in supporting the principles of public right. If the excitement which prevailed in England had deprived the nation for a time of its habitual good sense, we might now have been engaged in war with the Russian Empire, and playing a subordinate part to France in a great campaign for the expulsion of the Tsar's armies from a territory in the very heart of Europe. In such an enterprise the success or failure could not have depended on ourselves. In determining the

time and manner of the operations we could have had no voice, and peace would have been concluded when and on what terms it pleased the continental states engaged, without England having the power to prevent it. In short, all the objections which apply to British interference in European contests applied in the highest degree to a war for the liberation of Poland. These were the circumstances in which Lord Napier had to advise the Queen's Government, and if his presence at the Russian Court gave him in any way the power of averting such a calamity, we have reason to rejoice. Whatever may have been the faults of the Russian Government, we have no doubt there is a class at St. Petersburg which takes a fairer and more liberal view of the relations of Russia to the conquered Poles; and if Lord Napier was convinced that the late rebellion must end in the discomfiture and renewed subjection of the unhappy people, he was wise not to inflame the animosities of the Russians against their victims, and destroy the influence of a class inclined to justice by threatening the Empire with foreign war."

Even after the debate on Mr. Horsman's resolution war was regarded as a possibility, although, as Lord Napier's next letter to Madame Novikoff shows, he did not despair of peace. The letter is not dated, but as Parliament was prorogued on July 28 it must have been written after that date but before September 7, when the French proposal for a Congress on the affairs of Poland was rejected and the incident came to an end:—

"MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—I am very grateful to you for your kind memory so little deserved. I continue to be very much occupied and concerned,

but I have not at all lost hope of a peaceful conclusion. The result of the debates in Parliament was on the whole pacific, though not quite so much so as I expected. The Parliament is now prorogued. For six months the question of peace or war lies in the hands of Lord Palmerston and Lord Russell, who will determine it on general grounds with a view to all the interests, engagements, alliances of our Government and the sentiments of our people.

“The nation will receive and approve the resolution of the ministers. I think the resolution will be for peace. But the Russian Government must do more to help us. Prince Gortschakoff is popular, the Government is strong. They are the more able to be prudent and to make concessions. Those who are conscious of weakness are stubborn and precipitate. Those who are conscious of strength can be calm and just. There are still some expedients which have not been used and some avenues to peace which have not been opened. But we have our hands on the door, and the latch will be raised when the proper moment arrives.

“As to Peterhof, I long to come to it to have a solitary expedition on a fine day with the prospect of meeting you and talking over all these affairs. But I cannot fix the day yet.

“Believe how sincerely I am your friend and how happy I shall be to see you again, NAPIER.”

Lord Napier remained at St. Petersburg for another year. In September 1864 Sir Andrew Buchanan was appointed as his successor.

In my endeavour to trace the origin of the zeal with which in later years Madame Novikoff sought to interpret her country to the English public, I came upon a letter from Lord Napier and Ettrick which contains the

first suggestion I can find in her correspondence of the need for such a mission of interpretation and conciliation. Lord Napier when Ambassador in Russia had conceived a very profound affection and respect for Madame Novikoff. Again and again in his letters he refers, and always with genuine feeling, to the pleasant times they had spent together at St. Petersburg and at Peterhof, and to the end of his life he continued to cherish the friendship he had formed in her early married days.

When Lord Napier was leaving Russia in the latter end of 1864 he made a speech upon Anglo-Russian relations which attracted a good deal of attention in both countries. As this speech and the letter in which Lord Napier explained its drift and object appear to have produced an abiding impression and ultimately a moulding influence upon Madame Novikoff's mind, they deserve more than a passing notice.

It is not usual for British ambassadors to make public speeches. But before he left St. Petersburg Lord Napier spoke twice, once at a dinner in the English Club, the other time in reply to the address from the British residents. At the former he referred to Alexander II. as "a Sovereign of whom the whole world recognises his firmness, benevolence and sincerity, and his enlightened and humane intentions. And moreover, we have been sympathetic spectators of a great, transformed, regenerated nationality."

Much had to be done, however, before the British public could be induced to believe in the "transformed and regenerated nationality."

Lord Napier's second speech was devoted to an exposition of the need for a better understanding

between the two nations. It is worth while reproducing some of it, if only to show how long ago British diplomacy endeavoured to lay the foundations of the entente which it was reserved to Sir E. Grey and M. Isvolsky to proclaim to the world. Between 1864 and 1908, forty-four years passed, largely in bickering and occasionally in preparing for war, all of which troubles might have been averted if the spirit of this admirable speech had animated the British Foreign Office and the British Press. Lord Napier said :—

“ It is true that we have passed through a period dangerous to the friendly relations of England and Russia, and to the peace of Europe. It is equally undoubted that if this crisis has passed over without the disastrous consequence to which you have alluded, that result is mainly due to the wisdom of Her Majesty’s Ministers, who did not allow their determination in a matter of universal and lasting interest to be influenced by the aspect of a partial and transitory evil. In the secondary part which I was called upon to play in these negotiations, I endeavoured to furnish Her Majesty’s Government with correct views of the policy of the Imperial Government and the feelings of the Russian nation. I tried to speak as an impartial, but invariably well-meaning, judge, without allowing myself to be blinded by the passions of the moment. I was supported in this course by the kindness graciously shown to me by His Majesty the Emperor, and by the confidence felt in my intentions by His Excellency Prince Gortschakoff. Gentlemen, we may unreservedly express our sympathies for a great nation, governed by a good monarch, and labouring with firmness and calmness at a remarkable change which is preparing for it a more prosperous future. While

I express these sentiments I know that I act as the interpreter of the sincere feelings of my countrymen living in Russia. If the political relations existing between Russia and England do not offer the basis of an exclusive and constant friendship, they yet afford much cause for mutual good offices. We cannot flatter ourselves with the hope that the interests of two so differently constituted Powers, whose expansive forces in regard to influence, trade, and strength nearly approach each other on many sides, should never come into collision. It is the duty of diplomacy to obviate, or at any rate to weaken, the motives for differences which might arise, and to seize every legitimate opportunity for friendly co-operation. Pressing circumstances impose upon both Powers the imperative necessity of pursuing a peaceful policy. It appears to me that the opinion of most thoughtful Russians, whether servants of the State or private individuals, is favourable to England. It would be useless to deny that there are points with regard to which the honest and deliberate feelings of the majority of Englishmen are opposed to Russia. I expect to witness a remarkable change in this respect. The diffusion of education, the increase of trade, the development of public liberty in the Empire, and a reserved attitude of the Imperial Cabinet in the Oriental question, will arouse a friendly feeling in England, and give rise to a more liberal estimate of the value of Russia in the political and religious balance of Europe. By this means the suspicions and enmities dating from the other times will cease. I think that the relations between the two Governments may inspire us with confidence at present, and that they will soon afford greater cause for satisfaction. It is to be regretted that the years which

have elapsed since the peace of 1856 have not been characterised by greater progress in the principles of commercial freedom, and by a more flourishing trade between the two countries."

The *Moscow Gazette*, then edited by M. Katkoff, the greatest of Russian journalists, praised Lord Napier's speech very warmly.

Madame Novikoff having also expressed herself favourably, Lord Napier addressed to her the following letter :—

"H.M. EMBASSY, BERLIN,
November 23, 1864.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Mr. Michell has written to tell me that M. Katkoff has published a favourable article concerning my address, and that *you* are glad of it. I thank you for this new proof of your kind sentiments, and I am sorry that our last interview was so brief and disturbed that I could not explain to you the meaning and the motives of my answer, which, however, M. Katkoff has perfectly guessed and characterised. I do not speak of the part about *myself*, that was too flattering and friendly, and it is of little importance in a public sense. I speak of my allusions to the collision which might occur between the two countries, and my reference to Free Trade and to the obstinate resentments of Englishmen towards Russia.

"When I left Russia I wished to say something to the English and the Russians. The merchants gave me an opportunity of doing so. I might have said something merely civil, courteous, and colourless. That would have had no effect one way or the other. I might have said something highly coloured with praise of Russia that would have called forth in

England abuse both of Russia and of me, and many Russians would have said it was mere diplomacy and hypocrisy. I thought the best compliment I could pay the Russians was to tell them the *truth*, to hold up to them a *true* picture of the relations between England and Russia, to say to *all* publicly what I have constantly said to *many* privately. You are one witness that I have done so. If there be some Russians still that cannot *bear* the truth, who think that the truth is hostility, and who believe that I, who have endeavoured to do my duty to Russia all these years, alone and against the feelings of my country and Government, could now desire to wound the feelings of Russians who have been so kind to me, then I really cannot help it. I cannot contend against such obstinate illusions. The English are still generally adverse to Russia, the feelings about Poland, Turkey, Circassia, etc., are still very active with us. To bring England to a better and juster feeling towards Russia great prudence and moderation must be used. The English must be accustomed to hear *good* said of Russia gradually. You may say that we are very stubborn and unjust. I admit at least that the English are very tenacious of resentments. It is the nature of our nation. That nature must be recognised and dealt with accordingly. I think I understand how to deal with it. The only notice of my speech in the English Press that I have seen proves, I think, that I am right. You will see how strong the animosity still is. You will see that they think I judge Russia *too favourably*, yet the tone of the article is rather more friendly than before.

“All this is about *myself*, which is wrong, but believe that I think more of you and of your kindness, in writing it, than of myself, and that I shall ever retain

a grateful sense of your goodness and of that of your husband, to whom I commend myself.

"If you have not seen the article in the *Times*, Michell can show it you, or I will send it to you. Believe me, ever truly your friend, NAPIER."

It is easy to understand the impression this letter produced upon the mind of its recipient. The veteran ambassador set forth frankly and clearly the facts of the situation. "The English are generally adverse to Russia." The English "must be accustomed to hear good said of Russia gradually." "The English are very tenacious of resentments. It is the nature of our nation. And that nature must be recognised and dealt with accordingly." "The best compliment I could pay to the Russians was to tell them the truth." These sentences, consciously or unconsciously, appear to have inspired all Madame Novikoff's subsequent career. She never forgot that it is the best compliment to a nation to tell it the truth as to how it is regarded by its neighbours. She was always deeply impressed by the tenacious resentment of England against her own country, and she made it one of the chief objects of her work to "accustom the English to hear good said of Russia gradually."

Lord Napier left St. Petersburg in the autumn of 1864. Before he departed he went salmon fishing in Finland, as many of his successors have done after him. On his return he wrote Madame Novikoff, on July 2, the following letter, notable for the canny Scotch caution of its closing sentence:—

"I went to Finland, to the banks of the river Mouksen, to the cascades of Imatra. It is a noble river; a real picturesque prodigality of nature, not a useful, sensible water to turn mills and float vessels,

like a Neva or a Rhine, but a wild, turbulent torrent running to and fro for the pleasure of poets, painters, and fishers; the Danube with the physiognomy of a mountain brook. The cascades are the least part of it, it is the whole that is beautiful. I like the country very much too. Stones and bricks, water and sky, are all it offers. The people are very poor and simple; but, let not your Muscovite feelings be offended, there is something in the aspects and industry of the people which you see to be the result of Protestantism and freedom—comparative freedom.”

A month later, he began a letter at St. Petersburg and finished it at Berlin, which is written in a vein more like Lord Dufferin than Lord Napier. Here, again, note the quiet sting in the closing sentence:—

“DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—It seems that a certain charming vagrant diplomatic Lady sighs for a certain stationary Parliamentary Lord. She hopes, I presume, that the person so honoured, so happy, may bend his steps towards some neutral spot in Germany where accident, fortune, may conduct her divine feet, and where the sympathies exchanged under the cedars of Lebanon may be renewed under the lime-trees of Rhineland.¹ I wish I could help to realise this pretty vision, of which I know nothing, but which I discover by my own penetration. I will do all I possibly can. I will set a spy upon the movements of the Lord, who was last heard of at the great Shooting Match between the House of Peers and the House of Commons. . . . I met the French Consul from Warsaw. I asked him whether there

¹ Madame Novikoff's sister-in-law at Vienna had inquired whether there was any chance that Lord Dufferin, whom she had met in the Lebanon, might visit Germany that summer.

was anything going on at that city. He said, 'Non. Il n'y a rien. Les affaires sont tout à fait *suspendues*.' To which I replied sarcastically, 'Et les hommes aussi.' In this morning's paper there are five executions."

Lord Napier and Ettrick left the British Embassy at Berlin in 1865, and in the following year he became Governor of Madras.

He wrote to her:—

"In the beginning of March I shall take the reins of my new Government, of which I know nothing. I do not mean to be an active governor, or to make any mischievous improvements. I will do as little harm as possible to the mysterious millions by innovation, and if they make a revolution I will not hang as many as Mouravieff¹ or Mr. Eyre of Jamaica. Ever yours sincerely."

When Lord Napier went to his governorship at Madras, he passed out of sight but not altogether out of mind. Madame Novikoff wrote occasionally, and her letters were always welcome to the Ambassador in his Indian exile. Here are some of his letters, written when he was in India, which I quote, not merely for their note of affectionate friendship, but for the sketch they give of the life of a Governor of Madras forty years ago.

"MADRAS, *March 29, 1866.*

"MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—Your letter, dated the 15/30 of January, lay a long time untouched

¹Mouravieff was the Russian Governor who in 1863 restored order in Poland with what was regarded outside Russia as excessive severity. Mr. Eyre was Governor of Jamaica, who was also believed to have been too savage in the measures which he took to repress the rising in Jamaica in 1865.

on my table. It reached Madras during my absence at Calcutta. This must explain and excuse the length of time during which I have seemed to be silent and ungrateful. I am not ungrateful. Your faithful memory touches me very deeply, and I feel how little I deserve such a fidelity. There is no *fait accompli*, if by that you insinuate I have forgotten your goodness and the pleasure which I enjoyed in your society. I shall ever remember it with gratitude and pleasure. The little room at Peterhof, in the street of which I have forgotten the name! I see all the arrangements, and the people who used to come in so often and go away so reluctantly, and one lady with her hands pressed together!

“You ask me about my ‘projects for summer,’ as if I could go where I pleased, and as if I was hesitating between the Islands and Peterhof, or between Baden and Kissingen. Know, then, that when a governor comes to Madras he comes on an engagement for five years, and he must turn his back upon Europe and all its pleasant places. My plans for summer are these. I go first from here, Ghindy, to Madras. That is only a journey of 6 miles. Then I remain at Madras till the first of July. On the first of July I gather my people together and start for Bangalore, a military station on the Plateau of Mysore. Look for Mysore in the map. There is at least *this* advantage in having a friend in India, one may learn a little geography. At Bangalore I meet the tents and elephants, and from thence I set out for a march in the wilderness like the Children of Israel. I visit three provinces called Bellary, Karnool, and Cuddapah, the driest, most desolate, most unhealthy of this country, which has been severely tried by the recent droughts and scarcities. Marching up and down in the

wilderness will occupy six weeks. After that I will take refuge for a fortnight in a mountain fortress called Nundydroog, which rears its battlements 4000 feet above the sea level. After the refreshment of mountain air I shall be ready for another progress in the plain, which will probably be directed to Trichinopoly and the more fertile provinces of the South.

"The whole tour will last three months; just the period you will spend beside some delightful shades and waters. My wife will during this time be absent. *She* can go home. Her place is taken on board the steamer of June, and she will remain in Scotland till November. I do not care to look further forward. How do you like *my* summer marching in the wilderness with tents and elephants? I shall have eleven elephants, about a dozen riding horses, and about a hundred peasants carrying loads on their heads. Every gentleman will have a separate tent, and there will be a general tent for dinner and society. Would you like to ride with us? Tell me who comes to see you every day, and whether you have any new pictures and pretty things, and how your husband is, and what office he now holds. And how is your sister-in-law Novikoff, with the great blue eyes?—Ever, my dear friend, your devoted faithful,
NAPIER."

"June 16, 1866.

"No, you would not come here; no, not even for a friend, if you could see what sort of place it is at this moment. For three days there has been a tremendous gale of wind blowing, without intermission, from the interior of the country, bringing with it clouds of dust and a burning air, so that the whole sky is darkened and every corner of the house penetrated with the subtle sand. Thermometer 92° to 98° Fahrenheit. We

have still nearly a month of this torment before we can go away. *When* we go away my wife will go to the Neilgherry Hills, 7000 feet above the level of the sea, with lakes and woods and the temperature of the Italian Alps. I, on the other hand, shall go to a distant torrid province called Ganjam, where the population are dying of starvation, as your Finnish people sometimes die. I cannot give my body to be eaten, but I can give my presence and sympathy, and send down some money and some rice. It will be very painful. An Indian famine must be a miserable sight. Now, what shall I tell you? I have got two fine houses here, one in the Town, the other in the vicinity. They are airy, spacious palaces, rather vast and void, for the climate does not permit curtains and furniture. *We* do *not* die of hunger or thirst. I have no difficulties with Government. The officials are very friendly and considerate; there is no malice or opposition. The people who surround me are partly relatives and partly friends. The amount of mechanical work is not oppressive. There is much to do for the good of the mysterious millions who surround us, and of whom we know very little; and there is no money to do it with. For the rest, I am here to pay my debts and to save a little money. I don't yet see exactly how it is to be done, but I am yet in all the trouble and expenses of a beginning."

"MADRAS, *July* 4, 1867.

"How I wish you were here! My wife has gone home, on family affairs, for three or four months. Here I sit. There is your photograph, with the string of beads on your knee. My table is covered with all the recollections and spoils of the past. Three windows open before my eyes on a deep verandah. Three corresponding apertures in the shutters of the verandah

open on the park. The great banyan trees are waving in the monotonous sea-breeze, the antelopes are leaping on the turf, the surf sends its ceaseless roar along the wind. The sun has just set. The world begins to breathe. I fancy that the musicians are just tuning their instruments at the bandstand. Round the bandstand there is a curved walk which is called 'Cupid's Bow,' but, alas! the god never draws it. My horse is waiting at the door. You are enjoying life at some German Bath, so fresh, so cool. Remember me in the pleasant, bubbling waters."

"SCHERMADEVI, TINNEVELLY, SOUTH INDIA,
September 26, 1868.

"In a bungalow on the edge of a great tank
among pepul trees and palms.

"MY DEAR AND GOOD FRIEND,—I am down here near Cape Comorin in order to visit the Christian Missionaries and their black sheep, who are all white! It is a pastoral visit, and I catechise the little children, reading the Bible secretly in the morning so as to know what to ask! I slip in a little malicious heresy here and there, or questions insoluble! Are *you* orthodox?"

"MADRAS, *March 21, 1871.*

"It is true, they asked me to remain another year in India. The natives of the country have the weakness to like your humble servant, and desired to continue his rule for a little longer, uncertain what Stork might follow after this Log. I don't do much, but I persuade them that I wish them well. I take an interest in them, and they in me and in my wife."

Lord Napier was fated to still higher destinies. When Lord Mayo was murdered on the Andaman

Islands, in 1872, Lord Napier was suddenly summoned to undertake the duties of acting Viceroy until the arrival of Lord Mayo's successor. I shall have occasion to quote hereafter from Lord Napier's correspondence, for he remained a sincere friend of Madame Novikoff till his death.

CHAPTER V.

THE KEYSERLING CORRESPONDENCE.

THE Keyserling Correspondence began in 1866. For some years it was kept up with great punctuality, but after 1876 the correspondence waned, although it never altogether ceased. But Madame Novikoff was absorbed by the Turkish War and the Slavonic cause; the Count remained throughout a "savant," above politics, devoted only to scientific problems.

There were hundreds of letters from Count Keyserling; how many there were from Madame Novikoff who can say? The Count evidently treasured them much, and he tells how he has bound her letters in a volume, all by themselves alone. Here and there I have found notes of the letters to which the Count is replying, otherwise there is not much to guide the editor as to the *raison d'être* of many of his remarks. In a general reminiscent survey of half a century's active life it is impossible to do more than to skim, in a most cursory fashion, over this voluminous correspondence.

Count Keyserling appears to have been very sincerely attached to the young Russian lady, whom he met in the salon of the Grand Duchess Helena. Neither of them quite understood how it came to pass that so great a friendship should have sprung up between two natures which, however sympathetic they might be, were very far apart. Keyserling was



COUNT ALEXANDER KEYSERLING.
Curator of the University of Dorpat.

an elderly savant, a freethinker, and anything but a Pan-Slavist. Madame Novikoff was a young lady in St. Petersburg society, Orthodox, and devoted to the Pan-Slavonic idea, which she inherited from her parents. But no sooner had they met than they began a correspondence which was characterised throughout by the note of frank, sincere, but strictly platonic affection. They do not even discuss love in the abstract, although the Count once seemed to approach the danger zone when he declared: "You speak of a feeling of doubt of some sacred things. I would like to evoke in you the realities. The only basic reality is Love." But it was only a seeming. For the basic reality was not the love of each for the other, but that which is the ultimate essence of all sentient existence. The Count was a philosopher, and after declaring the only basic reality is Love, he proceeded to lose himself in abstractions. He writes (October 29, 1867) :—

"I am making some progress in my analysis of the soul during this (worldly) dream. No one can cause the dream to cease. The soul proper is a mirror in which are depicted movements of the brain, but the soul is not enclosed in the body. This, however, is getting complicated! I will say simply, that 'my soul would be with you.' "

I quote that as the warmest expression of affection discoverable in the letters. Once when Madame Novikoff was in Germany he concluded his letters to her jokingly with the phrase, "I am so far off from you that I can conclude quite *convenablement* by the words: 'Je vous aime.' "

It is so with all Madame Novikoff's correspondents. There is at least this immense difference between her and Princess Lieven, that she and her innumer-

able friends are always *convenables*. Men were strongly attracted by her, and some of them, I dare say, tried to make love to her, as is the fate of mortals. But, like "the Imperial votaress of the West," Madame Novikoff passed through life "in maiden meditation fancy free." That phrase can hardly be applied to a matron, but it indicates the detachment of her mind from the individual. She was a staunch comrade, a sympathetic correspondent, and a most affectionate friend, but nothing more.

Count Keyserling, in one of the most interesting of his letters, attempts to account for the tie that united them in the paradoxical ground that there were no friendships so lasting as those which had no *raison d'être* at all !

Madame Novikoff tells an amusing story à propos of this student friendship between Count Keyserling and Bismarck.

The two young men were as unlike each other as you could imagine. Keyserling was spare, reserved, shy, and a bookworm. Bismarck a jolly, boisterous young fellow, full of animal spirits, ever ready for a riot or a spree, enjoying dancing and drinking much more than he enjoyed deep studies. One day Keyserling, in opening his letters, seemed greatly perplexed. "What is the matter?" asked Bismarck. "Well," Keyserling replied, "Mother writes that an aunt and a couple of cousins are coming for a week to Berlin, and as they are very young and inexperienced, I must go about everywhere with them, offering them all sorts of amusements. It is most annoying, as I have to prepare myself for the examinations and have no time for pretty country cousins!"

Bismarck immediately grasped the situation, and seized his chance.

"Have you ever seen these young girls?" he asked.
"Have they seen you?"

"Never in my life. They are perfect strangers to me."

"Capital!" exclaimed his friend. "Nothing could be better. Let me be Count Keyserling for the time being, and you become simple Bismarck. You stay at home, and I shall become a first-rate cicerone during all the time of their visit."

Keyserling eagerly accepted the proposition. When the young ladies arrived, Bismarck met them as Keyserling, and placed himself at their disposition during their stay in Berlin. Keyserling buried himself in his books, and thought no more about it until the girls had gone home to the Baltic provinces. A week or so later he was dismayed by receiving a letter from home, in which his mother expressed her great delight in hearing from the young ladies and their mother how immensely they had enjoyed themselves, how very jolly and kind their cousin had been. And, continued his fond parent, "I am overjoyed to hear from their descriptions that you have grown quite stout and robust during your stay at Berlin. I could hardly recognise you from their accounts, and we are longing to see you for ourselves."

Alas! when Keyserling returned home he was still the spare, pale student that he had been before, and to relieve the alarm of his mother, who thought he must have been ill and lost all his flesh, he had to confess the pious fraud that had been practised upon his cousins, a fraud which gave equal satisfaction to every one concerned.

The following is a translation of an autograph letter to Count Keyserling from Prince Bismarck written when he was Prussian Ambassador at St. Petersburg:—

“ST. PETERSBURG, *June 2, 1859.*

“DEAR KEYSERLING,—From your letter to my wife I see with regret that you are suffering from illness through the intermediation of wife and child. I know from my own experience how depressing that is, and how much more easily we bear suffering in our own body. May water, air and rest soon make your first-born revive again. It goes well with us, except that I shall have to separate from my people in a few days. On Wednesday the little caravan will start for Pomerania *via* Kovno, and I mean to follow in three or four weeks. I am so spoiled a domestic animal that the idea of the solitary June which I shall have to spend here causes me the most uncomfortable feelings. For my own person, I am still on furlough; but they make difficulties about letting poor Croy be the substitute, and want to send somebody on a *mission extraordinaire* for the time. In my opinion a superfluous expenditure by a Government which for the present does not, strictly speaking, negotiate politically, and at the same time an attempt on my finances, since I should have to bear the expense for the representation. The discussion is little flattering for Croy, and it will probably have the final result that he passes from here into another position or into private life. I should be sorry to lose him as a member of the household; in business I can spare him.

“In the enclosure I send you a long *document* by a Prussian gamekeeper against Baron Taube. The affair seems already to be known to you, to judge from the contents of the paper, and as it is already before the law courts you will, of course, not be in a position to settle it; at the best you may be able to hurry it on, when opportunity offers. I only wished to ask

you whether the said Taube¹ is perhaps very unlike in gentleness to the bird of the same name, and whether you have heard enough about the matter from both sides to have at least the vague impression that the complainant does not quite proceed without cause. I shall accordingly modify the tone in which I shall apply to Souvoroff in due course. My *primâ facie* impression is that it would be reasonable not to withhold the gamekeeper's pass and belongings any longer at the least, and you will be humane and answer soon, lest the misery of the man be aggravated.

"In politics the absence of Gortschakoff is causing a stagnation which is less intensely felt at the present moment because there are no vigorously boiling pots on the fire. If this state of affairs continues, you are not safe from being invaded by me as soon as my wife will be away. If the prospect does not frighten you, let me know how one has to proceed to pass from Russia into your amiable presence, and when is your departure for Schwahlen, to which you allude, coming on? Unless clouds should unexpectedly appear on the horizon, I hope to be able to make myself free for four or five days before my journey to Germany, in order to see how you are keeping house. Remember me to the graces of your spouse. Mine sends greetings and thanks heartily for your letter, which she will answer from Pomerania.—Yours,
V. BISMARCK."

In the Count's letters there are frequent allusions to contemporary politics, which show he was by no means in sympathy with the Russian policy then much in vogue in Moscow. On August 21, 1866, he notes with sly humour that Katkoff, the famous

¹ Anglice, "dove."

editor of the *Moscow Gazette*, "has had an audience with the Emperor, has received some slight encouragement, but also been counselled not to regard as a traitor every one who has not had the luck to be born 'perfectly Muscovite.'" In the same letter he reports the holding of a Jaegerfest at Reval, but no singing of German National Anthems as in the old innocent days. "I did not take part therein, lest it should be said that I had 'invented' the festival."

The interest of mankind in the political controversies of forty years ago is but faint. The human interest is perennial. Count Keyserling was a charming correspondent, courtly, deferential, but full of a mystical devotion to the ideal. He writes to Madame Novikoff (Aug. 25, 1867) :—

"I must crave your indulgence towards the playful freaks of fancy which sometimes flit across my thoughts, for at bottom I am filled with joy to see your enthusiasm for all that is good and unselfish. Therein, I fancy, is to be found the atmosphere of eternity and the religion universal."

Count Keyserling, although a freethinker, was no materialist. On November 11, 1867, he makes the somewhat sweeping assertion: "My opinion is that materialism only exists by its ignorance of the arguments of Kant, which it can in no wise refute."

Here are a couple of extracts from the correspondence of that year, samples of many others :—

March 2, 1867.—"Man is suspended midway 'twixt ALL and NOTHING, but is unable to attain either the one or the other of these extremes. Don't give up trust in your ideals. Draw from my experience somewhat

of confidence in Things Eternal. . . . I wish I could charm away from you the gloomy thoughts which sometimes possess you. But all my science cannot help in that. To think that science is a panacea for all the ills that assail youth, is it not to presume too much? "

REVAL, *October* 1867.—"The flight of the swallow seems at times restless and inconstant, ominous of tempest! I am no cloud-scattering Jove, but must bow my head beneath the devastating storm. You speak of natures problématiques. You are eminently problematical, and I have not yet solved the enigma what you are. . . . My wish is to be good—good for everybody, and especially for you. Help me, and I shall succeed in that desire."

The correspondence has a wide range. "What is your opinion of Bismarck?" he asks, and then plunges into a dissertation on the differences between Archbishop Platon and Pastor Dobnes, who had been in controversy on the claims of the Orthodox Greek Church and the Protestant world. He discusses the merits and demerits of the payment of members of Parliament, warns her that Baltic questions may assume European proportions, and so forth. He laments that "the modern struggle for life leaves our present generation no time to think upon the higher and vaster ideals of international life."

No matter how busy he is he always finds time to encourage and console his correspondent, whose letters he declares are to him unfailing sources of delight. The arrival of her letter in Lent has made for him "a festal day indeed." And again he tells her, "Your letters sound to me like the warbling of

the nightingales ; you speak like twenty people at a time."

He begs to be kept continually informed of her doings, and when she complains of feeling awkward he considerably assures her that such awkwardness is inseparable from a certain stage of culture. He wishes her to make Bismarck's acquaintance, reports that Napoleon is *éteint et lourd* (all this in 1867) and is losing his *savoir faire*.

In May 1867 he reports the Slav contra-governmental movements as being new to him and of much interest. He writes (June 21, 1867): "We have been having enthusiastic festivals at Riga in honour of the Emperor. . . . We are all—so we were reminded in the allocution solennelle at the festival—inseparable parts of the one great Russian family. Various minds account for that reminder in various ways. *I* console myself with the idea that it makes me a member of the same family as yourself."

But always in the midst of political and philosophical dissertations the personal note reappears. He writes :—

"The sage sees his guiding star as it were in the tranquil waters of a woman's soul. In you I see the sky, and hope to discover the star also" (May 28, 1867).

Again on June 4.—"Don't give yourself up to the gloominess of thinking *personne ne songe à moi*. Such a thought is so contrary to the reality, and to your aspirations and natural right."

When he goes to Carlsbad he bemoans his cruel fate in not meeting her. He says :—

Aug. 12, 1867.—"Reality does not accord well with the life of our dreams, and at times it is the dream-life that we should prefer. . . . Since you are not here, I

have been wasting my time in walks about the district."

He goes to Paris to see the Exhibition, but "what is the value of all these multitudinous impressions when concentration alone can give happiness?" Always his thoughts turn to her: "What a pity you are not here to see all these things with me, and enhance a hundredfold their value."

He goes to the Jardin Mabille and comments on "the absurdity of the saying that decency is the mother of ennui." He thanks her for her "delicious letter," and compliments her upon her esprit. "You certainly know better than I do how to faire la phrase finale." The Count had nothing to learn in that respect from his correspondent. He writes: "Since none of my comparisons meet with your approval, I declare you incomparable." And then he jokingly added, "Adieu, soyons sages."

When the time draws near for his return to Dorpat, where he is a mere state employé and père de famille, he writes: "Shall soon be back again at my solemn duties, and suppose that two letters a month will then have to be the régime. . . . I have no heart to speak to you of worldly things, and I am ashamed to speak to you of things sentimental. . . . A stranger reading our correspondence would interpret all wrongly."

The Count was too morbidly afraid of being misunderstood. No stranger reading his letters could attribute to him anything that was not quite convenable. That he entertained for his young and brilliant correspondent a sincere affection does honour to them both. But as he laments on one occasion, "There is always some element of discord in the very things which are intended to unite mankind. . . . What is the goal towards which mankind is moving? There

would seem to be something even higher than dogma, which has as its centre love to one's neighbour."

"How miserable one sees oneself to be as soon as one wishes to do good to the soul of another."

"Our destinies do not always accord with our prayers, which have no other use than to console us on gloomy autumn days with dainty and innocent reveries."

"Machiavelli says that 'Corruption and Pessimism are twins.' Well, there is enough here to make one a pessimist."

"We must all have some destination," he says on another occasion, "for our ship of life. What is yours?" He answers his own question by suggesting, "Love for the Fatherland, for your nationality." From which it would seem that even to her intimates Madame Novikoff's Pan-Slavonic enthusiasm at that time was not so clearly manifest as it became afterwards. He is uneasy about the general peace and still more so about the tendencies of the Katkoff school, but their pedagogical schemes he admired as bold and original. "We have as yet no establishment of such a scope as to undertake education right from the A B C up to the sublimest academic mysteries."

Madame Novikoff in these early days shrank from the thought of medical women. Count Keyserling, who was more far-seeing, reproves her gently: "Don't condemn from prejudice the girl student who has just taken a medical doctor's degree at Zürich."

The following extracts and summaries of his letters may not be without interest:—

DORPAT, *Jan.* 9, 1865.—"The harsh voice of duty calls me to stay in Dorpat and not go to St. Peters-

burg. Probably I shall never re-enter your world." He recommends her Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, his best-known work. He explains briefly S.'s philosophy of will, being the foundation, the essence of everything. He admires his logic, does not accept his conclusions, and says they are most depressing.

April 15, 1865.—"The death of your Hereditary Grand Duke has filled all hearts with genuine sorrow. No one came in contact with the Grand Duke without feeling the charm of a personality essentially kindly and incapable of evil."

"Since Peter the Great, Russia had been peculiarly favoured in her Sovereigns. They had been exactly suited to their circumstances."

Perhaps it is as well that the Grand Duke died, for he was not tough enough (he hints) for the world he would have had to battle with.

The assassination of President Lincoln made him think how good it is to proclaim by one's death the triumph of a great cause.

May 11, 1865.—He tells her that he has been studying the Jewish system of education, and now he is all in favour of toleration for the Jews. "The brutality and ignorance which have governed our legislation concerning the Jews (Hebrews) is unheard of, and yet superior men like the late minister Ouvaroff and others are responsible for this."

Sept. 26, 1865.—He insists upon the German danger. The Germans have been first-class instruments of oppression, while at subjugating the Poles they are cleverer than the most zealous Muscovites. They will never denationalise the Polish peasants, however. Evidently he thinks there is far too much of the mailed fist about the Germans.

He pays a great deal of attention to educational questions, which, however, are too local for notice here. He writes much about the gymnasium and the kind of teaching to give, etc. Lithuania was apparently much discussed at this time in St. Petersburg. Evidently Keyserling was a good deal in advance of his time, in advance of Russian methods to-day.

Dec. 18, 1865.—Quotes story of Bismarck, his comrade in youth. B. was at Wiesbaden or Homburg, and was very cross because all the young misses ran to stare at him. Whence Keyserling argued that man's vanity is more deeply rooted than woman's. Women like hearing pretty compliments, and don't believe them; men like hearing them, and do believe them.

He says in this letter that he represents German culture in the service of Russia, and that when Russia will no longer have German culture in her provinces, nor Poles in the Western Government, he will no longer be there. "I am preparing you."

DORPAT, Feb. 1, 1866.— "Religious liberty is much more important than all our political institutions; and, if you will allow me to express a slight doubt concerning yourself, Madame, in this matter I fear you are somewhat too sceptical. Scepticism may prepare one for religious tolerance, but at bottom, that toleration rests upon an affectionate disposition towards all religious opinions, and on compassion towards abuse and error. The indifferent often imagine that religion is needed only by the ignorant; and as the masses are composed of these latter, religion can be used as a means of maintaining order. I fear, that from this point of view, religious persecution can often ally itself with absolute scepticism. Tocqueville

is perhaps not quite free from certain misconceptions on this subject. My conviction in the matter has been particularly strengthened (*vivifié*) precisely through my observation that at bottom nobody seems to make a point of religious toleration. The only persons who speak of religious toleration are those who wish to free themselves from oppression, but at the first opportunity they themselves become zealous (*empressés*) oppressors. Nevertheless, the cause of tolerance is progressing, continually progressing, and the Jews (the inventors of intolerance towards mixed marriages also) are also beginning to furnish soldiers against clerical oppression. Were the cause other than veritably a cause divine, it would have disappeared from the world long ago."

DORPAT, *April* 30, 1866.—"On the way I have been reading *L'École Critique, et Jésus-Christ*, by Pressensé, a pamphlet directed against Renan. If you have not already read this, you will find in it ample reason to attach no authority whatever to the work of Renan. The works of Strauss, those of the Tübingen school, have indeed shaken the foundations of the old criticism of religious documents, but how is it that they have had much less effect than the imaginative picture produced by Renan? The latter—that is the answer I give myself—acts on the senses, gives more or less visible embodiment to his assertions, and man is unfortunately built in such a way as not to believe in pure spirituality. To be convinced, we must be impressed. Is Truth perhaps an aristocrat and for ever denied to the masses?"

DORPAT, *May* 29, 1866.—"You perhaps do not know that Bismarck is a 'weak point' in my constitution. We were friends at the University together, and I

cannot free myself from a certain sympathy with him which I cannot justify. At bottom, I feel a horror for the internal situation in Prussia . . . absolutism amusing itself by wedding a parliament, like a woman who should take a husband solely in order to have the pleasure of deceiving him and making him appear ridiculous in the eyes of the world. The external politics of that country also only serve to confirm me in the conviction that there are in international relations an abyss of immoralities. . . . In spite of all that I love my friend, and that will serve as an answer to your first question."

But of making such extracts there is no end. I will conclude by quoting one more extract and one letter. The extract is from a letter in which he expounds his conception of what correspondence should be between friends:—

"I can only beg of you simply and sincerely to write to me just whatever comes into your mind—comfortably; for that is what I want to be the predominant feature of our relations.

"One should feel that the person to whom one is addressing oneself is taking a personal part in one's thought and individual existence; and allow me to declare, Madame, that I am such an one in relation to yourself."

The next letter is one of the last he wrote. Between the letter from which the above extract is taken and this letter there is a gap of nearly twenty years. During that time Madame Novikoff's Slavophilism took such a passionate and aggressive form that Count Keyserling could not follow her, and she had little time for abstract controversies on such a burning

topic. Besides, Madame Novikoff's business correspondence with others crowded out that with Keyserling. There is a shade of sadness in the letter not altogether to be wondered at.

“RAIKULL, *June 16/28, 1884.*

“DEAR FRIEND,—Many thanks. Your reappearance in private correspondence is an agreeable surprise, and above all a great pleasure to me. Certainly I have thought of you, if the journals have spoken of you less often. The *Allgemeine Zeitung of Munich* has treated you now as Princess Lieven and again as Egeria. Alongside of this prominence is the silence which may sometimes be wrongly taken for forgetfulness. You say, ‘To be forgotten is a great punishment.’ There is an inscription in one of our churches in Reval: ‘Vive memor Lethi.’ A lady who knows a little Latin has translated this incorrectly, ‘Live knowing how to forget.’ That is wiser perhaps than the exact text. Nevertheless, I can understand that ‘you sometimes feel left behind, like a soldier on the Shipka, in your unequal contest with the English Press.’ Brave and modest as one of those soldiers are you, in speaking of your insufficient forces. But are there not situations when even the cleverest of captains does not know how to get the upper hand? Such is, however, the almost unrealisable end you mean to attain sooner or later.

“I hope the position of Curator of St. Petersburg University suits your husband.

“I continue to be an admirer of the English Constitution, which has formed a nation of kings with a national royalty at their head. The great Gladstone has got what he wanted for himself in Egypt

and in the Soudan, and the nation may find the sacrifices greater than she cares to bear. But as human progress always advances by reactions, one would perhaps be wrong to despair.—Always your affectionate friend,
A. KEYSERLING."

I refer the reader to a subsequent chapter, the seventh, for some account of the literary or theological excursion which Count Keyserling undertook in company with Madame Novikoff on the subject of the Jewish ideas of the Life Hereafter.



Photograph by Elliott & Fry.]

C. P. VILLIERS.

M.P. for Wolverhampton, 1835-1898.

CHAPTER VI.

LORD CLARENDON AND CHARLES VILLIERS.

THE first notable English statesmen Madame Novikoff met were the two brothers the Earl of Clarendon and Charles Villiers.¹

It was in 1866, when she was at Ems, that she first made the acquaintance of Charles Villiers. He was then past sixty. An indefatigable letter-writer, though by no means too legible, he had the grace to date his letters, which afford many pleasant glimpses of political and diplomatic life in Western Europe in the brief breathing-space between 1866 and 1870.

The correspondence begins September 20, 1866, three days after Mr. Villiers and Madame Novikoff parted at Ems. Writing from Geneva, where he finds the Hotel D'Angleterre choked with the conquering army,—Prussians from the Bohemian battlefields,—Mr. Villiers proceeds :—

“Will you let me recommend to your attention a paper of this day (the 20th) called *L'Europe*? It is published in Frankfort, now daily. It contains, in the first place, a critique on La Vallette's letter, which

¹ The Right Hon. C. P. Villiers, brother of the Earl of Clarendon, born 1802, M.P. for Wolverhampton from 1835 till his death in 1898. A leader in the Corn Law Agitation, and President of the Local Government Board, 1866. The Earl of Clarendon, born 1800, died 1870. After leaving the diplomatic service, became Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland in 1847. Was Foreign Secretary 1853, 1856, 1865, and 1868.

I think very clever indeed, and also a paper by Dr. Sybel at Berlin, who puts forth a justification of the proceedings of Prussia, and also gives a kind of sketch of Prussian policy for a century past! It is interesting and ingenious, and goes some way to reconcile people to what they are about. Not exactly the sort of reading that ladies would generally like, but I don't think you will be offended if I say that is no reason why you would not like to read it. You are evidently interested in politics, and I dare say the Comte de Bussy has by this time discovered that he was not misinformed when he heard that you were instructed above all other ladies that he ever heard of."

As if to show that he accepted this estimate of her intelligence, Villiers asked for light on the Eastern Question :—

" In one respect I wish you would be less reserved, and tell me what your country is going to do about Greece. I see the fighting has begun in Crete, and all the world, of course, say that Russia is at the bottom of it all, and Louis N. complains that things are not left quiet in the East! The Russophobia, however, is all ready to break out again, so tell me that there is no reason for it, or perhaps no good reason for it—for with such an Emperor as you have now, we ought to prefer Russians and Christians to Turks."

Three days later he is writing from Interlaken. He laments that he does not know her address, " for though you will achieve it before you die, you have not yet the fame of Humboldt, which was such that he needed no address beyond his name and

whatever part of the world he lived in." Early in October Mr. Villiers writes from Geneva appealing to her to assume the rôle of interpreter of Russia and the Russians to English statesmen, a duty of which up to that time she had probably never dreamt. He wrote :—

"What I want you to do, is to tell me a little about your own great country, in which, believe me, I express to you with great sincerity my interest and my belief in an avenir for it that is not generally expected. What I should like to know is, whether the sentiment of the people (now it is being developed, and its expression suffered to be free) is warlike, or commercial and industrious and peaceful? I have an impression that they are a variety of the Slav race—that is, not idle and turbulent and difficult to govern, but steady, persevering, desirous of gain by means of industry; somewhat poetical, and, out of the royal and upper classes, not ambitious of more territory; and if they were well governed they would not willingly leave their own country, to which they are much attached, but which perhaps calumny has ascribed to them a desire to quit, as they would be sure of going to a better country than they left.

"Now you also are so candid, so able, so well-read, and so fond of your own country, tell me really what we are to expect of Young Russia; and if you are too much occupied with duties and pleasures to which you have now returned, recommend me some work, on which I can rely and by which I can inform myself all about that vast and noble country. I see English and foreign papers are already ascribing to her all sorts of objects in the East, and we are threatened in various ways by this *Question*

d'Orient. Do you believe in the Greeks? and do the Greeks (by means of their faith) place confidence in Russia? And if they were to rise generally against the Turks, would it be popular in Russia to assist them, if not to lead them? Turkey does seem indeed a hopeless case! I cannot see that he gets better, and he has now been sick very long; and though he is rather a fine wicked old gentleman (and gentleman he is), yet there is an end to all things, and Turkish gentility among the rest. Now I know from yourself that anybody may now say, and write, and think whatever they please in Russia. You therefore can give me your honest opinion on any political question, and as I am sure it would be worth having, I ask the favour of a letter containing your views on matters interesting to your country, and very much, of course, also to the rest of Europe; but if you are discreet at home, as you were at Ems, why, then, name the author that I may consult. You won't, I know, allow me to believe a word of Custine; besides, that is all obsolete now."

Madame Novikoff did not respond enthusiastically to the invitation to coach Mr. Villiers as to Russia and things Russian. Russians are bad correspondents, and Mr. Villiers was a little piqued when he wrote again from Paris, October 26, 1866, as follows:—

"Russia is famous for her diplomacy. She is equally well known for trusting the execution of her policy to the judgment of the accomplished women who represent her in the various capitals of Europe! Nothing, therefore, is less astonishing than to hear of Russian ladies exceeding all others by their intellect and acquirements, and yet observing that carefulness and skill in communicating with foreigners that must

render their service so invaluable at home. It would therefore only imply ignorance of what a traveller should know, if he was to think it strange that a lady who was openness itself in a foreign country, and in personal communication with strangers, should at once become reserved and indistinct, when called upon, from a distance, to communicate her thoughts upon public matters in writing. On this account, no person who had the good fortune to make Madame Olga Novikoff's acquaintance, during her séjour in Germany, has a right to expect that he can consult the oracle, by letter, from the extremity of Europe, with any peculiar profit. I do not therefore venture upon anything beyond this observation, that I have addressed four letters to my new friend since I left Ems, and from the letters that I have received from her, during that time, I cannot quite discover if she has ever received any one of them! No, that is too much; because, thinking over it for some time, I believe that the reference she has been kind enough to send me, in her last letter, to the works that would give me any correct information upon the real condition of Russia, is in consequence of my asking for her own opinion of the present policy of her country, of the avenir of her own country.

"I cannot explain my reason, and really I think sometimes, there is something independent of reason in this world, and that, some call instinct, and some inspiration, that prompts one to act, or occupy oneself with things which have no relation with one's previous thoughts or immediate interests, and this has been my case for some time about Russia. I fancy we have been greatly deceived about that country, and that her altered circumstances are about to reveal to us, much about the real character of her people,

opposed to all previous conceptions respecting it ; at all events, there is an experiment going on, amongst a population greater than any other in Europe, that deserves the attention of every statesman and philanthropist, and without claiming the title of either, but simply to have the ordinary curiosity of an Englishman, I cannot but think is now deserving of receiving attention. Now will that do for an apology for having troubled you with inquiries and with stupid notes, which your own extensive information and ability, as well as kindness of disposition, which was manifested to me at Ems, has perhaps provoked ? ”

He tells her that there is a Royal mission going to St. Petersburg to attend the wedding of the future Tsar.¹ “ What an easy way this would have been of visiting St. Petersburg, if one had been a courtier and about half a century younger. You will see something of these proceedings. How very interesting it would be to receive your account of what passed, and what impression our future King made upon yourself and upon the Grandees there ! I should be very fortunate if you would bestow a few moments in writing to me upon the occasion.”

Madame Novikoff kept no copies of her letters, so her report on “ our future King ” is lost to us. We gain, however, some glimpses from Mr. Villiers’ next letter, dated December 1. He writes :—

“ I wanted to hear your impressions about our future King and the English appearance on this occasion altogether. Perhaps I have no reason to complain, for if you had trusted Lord Fred. Poulett

¹ The Tsarewitch Alexander, afterwards Alexander III., was married to the Princess Dagmar, afterwards the Empress Marie Feodorovna, November 17, 1866.

with a letter on this subject, you would have been as candid as you were to the French Count at Ems who asked you to criticise his manuscript, and I know what you would have said. However, this we know already, that our people (including the highest) were immensely pleased with everything they saw, and with all the civility and something more which they received, and we here like to think of a rapprochement between the two countries. Certainly I do. I want to see, as I told you before, England in real alliance with Russia and the United States; and if China were a strong and regular Power (as it may be some day), I say the alliance should be quadruple! However, with Free Trade, the Triple Alliance would do much to keep the rest of the world quiet, and ourselves always prosperous."

Mr. Villiers, it may be remembered, was one of the fathers of Free Trade and the brother of a former Foreign Secretary. He was always keenly interested in foreign affairs, and was evidently quite disposed to adopt Madame Novikoff as his Egeria. He continued his letter with an interesting speculation as to the probable course of events in Europe. It was the year of Sadowa, and four years later the Germans were besieging Paris. He writes :—

"I wonder what your views are now of the future (only next year) in Europe? With all your wisdom and reading you have opinions, I know, and you know the opinions of those who seek to guide their country with their published thoughts. I think the year will not pass without a row! It does not seem to me that Bismarck finished his work the other day, and such things as he did should not be commenced unless they can be completed. I say nothing of the

policy itself ; but when you enter upon such a course I doubt if you can be relenting, for every compromise is ascribed to weakness, and confidence is recovered among your opponents. He has given terms to some and allowed the rest breathing - time, and he has satisfied nobody as yet. Must he not present some common cause to all Germans as such, to fight for and worthy of a great effort, and become then equal to the resistance that will be offered to him from within and perhaps without? Had Nicholas been alive, he would have meddled with the matter, and talked of suppressing revolution ! It is the great good fortune of Russia to have a chief now that minds his own business."

Mr. Villiers always comes back to Russia when he is writing to Madame Novikoff. He tells her that he is thinking of going to Russia himself to see the progress they are making, " but what can one ever know if you cannot speak the language? How I envied you the other day talking five languages at least, and with facility. Do send me a volume of your thoughts and speculation. You see so many clever people, and are so clever yourself. We accomplish great things by our steadiness and pursuit of wealth, but we are very dull, as all practical people are.

" Is it true," he asks, " that the new Bride," now the Empress Dowager and widow of Alexander III., " is very delightful ? "

Jan. 31, 1867.—Villiers wrote in ecstasies about the Russian tea sent him from Moscow :—

" I like it better than any other tea I have ever tasted, and as I have some every night before I go to bed, I think of its origin, and pronounce a blessing ! "

He is disquieted about the Cretan rebellion¹ and the sympathies which it excited in Russia, and uneasy about the peace of Europe :—

“ Nobody in these days feels much apprehension of France, which always used to be the ghost that was terrifying the rest of Europe; but that nation is now older than it was, and taken to shopkeeping as much as Napoleon charged us with doing—and a very rational occupation too. It does not prevent our enjoying life, which is wiser than destroying it, which history would almost show had been the favourite business hitherto.”

Seven months later, August 24, 1867, he writes :—

“ What a calm there appears to be in the world just now. Emperors embracing each other who the other day were slaughtering each other's subjects, and the Great Turk pledging himself to protect Christianity. Why should not the Pope and the Patriarch do some business together also? What a conflagration must be brewing! and yet how everybody is professing to desire Peace! and perhaps none is more sincere in that respect than Russia; and yet, to hear ignorant people talk, it would be supposed that she it was who was stirring up strife with a view to conquest. I don't believe a word of it. I should like to hear your views on the future now. There are two things I hear from Germany: one is that everybody says that there will be war between France and Prussia; and the other is that the new subjects of Prussia are very sick of their new Government. They have got their dear *Einheit*, and have to pay

¹ The Cretans rose in rebellion against the Turks September 1866. The struggle continued until December 1868.

rather more than they like for it; and it is not made more bearable by the manners of their new rulers. There is, however, a fate in these matters, and they were all doomed to fall under one Power; and if they have not fallen under the pleasantest in the world, yet it is one that belongs to this century, and not to the Middle Ages."

Writing from Aix-la-Chapelle, August 29, 1867, Mr. Villiers makes a remark which reads rather oddly from a man who lived to be the father of the House of Commons, sat sixty years in Parliament, and died in 1898 at the ripe age of ninety-six:—

"The fact is that I am not only blind, which was the reason of my visit to the oculist at Coblenz, but the attendance in Parliament now is so fatal to one's well-being that few are able to survive its effects after many years' service."

On the 15th of September he is again at Ems, sighing over the memories of her previous visit when she was there, and as usual catechising her as to Russian policy:—

"I should have liked very much to have had some talk on politics with you, and to hear from you what you are about with the 'Sick Man,' and what you say to the many rumours now afloat with respect to Russian policy in the rest of Europe. I always fight your battles when I hear the absurd and extravagant objects imputed to your country. Russians have shown quite as much wisdom of late years as other Governments, and they must be quite as much alive to their real interest in preserving peace and not meddling with their neighbours as any other Power in Europe. There has not been much sagacity shown of late, I think, in the other extremity of the

continents—indeed, it is what there is most to fear from that for want of the wisdom (of which we used to hear so much) we may see a war soon. . . .”

He adds :—

“ I was unlucky enough to miss my brother on his way home, but he wrote to me and said how much pleasure he had in making your acquaintance, and thought me very fortunate to have inspired so much interest as, he said, you were so kind as to take in my existence.”

The brother was his elder brother, the fourth Earl of Clarendon, born in 1800. He was one of the most notable of the Whig statesmen of the nineteenth century. He had begun his career as Ambassador to Spain. He ended it in 1870 as Foreign Secretary, a post to which he was four times appointed by the Queen—in 1853, in 1856, in 1865, and 1868. When Madame Novikoff met him he was on the eve of returning to office for the last time. His brother, Mr. Charles Villiers, had urged him to seize the first opportunity of making Madame Novikoff's acquaintance, and he had provided himself with an introduction from Lady Stanley of Alderley. Madame Novikoff was visiting Paris for the Exposition¹ and staying with her parents-in-law when Lord Clarendon was paying one of his frequent visits to the French capital. Lord Clarendon in his youth had a reputation for gallantry, and according to contemporary rumour he was intimately, although not legally, connected with the Imperial Court. Certain it is that he was always a welcome visitor at the Tuileries.

When he called upon Madame Novikoff, he mistook

¹ The Universal Exhibition at Paris, opened April 1 and closed November 3, 1867.

the door of her hotel, and was nearly turned away by the servant, who could not realise the possibility of a gentleman entering the house by the back door. Lord Clarendon was, however, persistent, and leaving him in the kitchen, the footman ran upstairs to tell his mistress that a strange gentleman, who had come in by the back door, was waiting in the kitchen, and wished to see her. On being introduced to the drawing-room he mentioned Charles Villiers as his brother, and Madame Novikoff guessed it was Lord Clarendon, so well known for his brilliant wit. Lord Clarendon died three years later, and during two of these years he was in office as Secretary of Foreign Affairs. There are only a few of his letters in the collection, which will be noticed in due course.

Mr. Villiers, who was a much more indefatigable correspondent than his brother, always protested his confidence in Russia. On September 21, 1867, he wrote:—

“In England there is a disposition to believe that Russia is an enemy of Liberty and a sort of ogre that goes about looking for sickly people to swallow them up. I have never believed that, and believe it less than ever now. However, Europe, I believe, is becoming Christian, and for various reasons is going to act as if she were. England is going to love everybody. How long it will last we cannot say, but perhaps till the end of the year.”

He was inconsolable that, despite all his efforts, he had failed to meet her on the Continent in 1867, and deplored his dire misfortune in that the Abyssinian expedition¹ necessitated his return to London. On October 11 he writes from Paris:—

¹ King Theodore of Abyssinia having imprisoned Captain Cameron, British Consul, and other Englishmen, in 1863, a British expedition was

" . . . I am living in the Exposition. I see so much to stare at, and so much to think about, that I greatly prefer it to talking *stuff* to one's countrymen, who are now crowding the streets of Paris, and whom one could not otherwise avoid. I don't think I can have finished it before the 28th; still, that is later than I ever usually return to England—and the Parliament, it seems, is to meet in November, there being no chance of *King Theodore giving in*; on the contrary, they say he is quite *proud* of being at war with England! and that his only idea is to make preparations adequate to the occasion! and to give us *a very warm reception*! Who knows whether he is not right? I have more faith in yellow fever and English *mismanagement* than I have in the Armstrong Gun as deciding the issue. We are now on very good terms with the Turks, but that, unfortunately, is one of Theodore's complaints against us, and his hatred of the Turk in every shape is curiously said to arise from his hatred of the *Slave Trade*, which, he says, they *encourage*, but which he, as a *Christian* (*he says*) abhors. And he complains that *we* support his enemies!

" Things look better here, or at least there is a lucid interval just now apparently, and they speak with horror of war (especially as they are not ready at present). There are, however, storms expected when the Chambers meet. But if Trade improves and the price of Bread falls, I don't think *Oratory* alone will prevent people from sleeping! . . . "

dispatched under Lord Napier to release the captives. The expedition landed in Abyssinia January 2, 1868, and evacuated the country June 25, 1868; Magdala was stormed, King Theodore killed, and the captives released, April 10-13.

The cynical note always reappears in the letters of Mr. Charles Villiers. Writing from London, November 20, 1867, he says :—

“ . . . I never knew so much said about *Peace* in England and France but that war was sure to be at hand. That *old Fox* (Napoleon III.) has handled his topics with great skill, and if his world are in the humour to be gulled, he has afforded them a pretext. Believing that no amount of civilisation ever divests man of the animal part of his nature, or indeed ever allows it to be subordinate to the other, or what is called the higher part, I consider that his real danger was in the cost of the *vivre* ; and now as I suppose that he has declared a maximum in the price of bread, and intends to borrow money to create employment, that peace will be preserved in Paris, and the politicians will therefore want the opportunity for proclaiming *their* griefs. This will be agreeable to you, who intend spending a winter at Paris. When you do, the occasion will be given to you of enlightening your friends abroad with your views of what is passing, and what is *coming* ! and nobody that I know is more capable, from acuteness of mind and strength of character, of doing this than yourself. I shall like very much to hear *your* impressions of the French speech and the official *pamphlet*. Germany will, in my opinion, *smile* (at this moment) to hear from Paris that she is *made* and must not be meddled with (at least by France), and the proposal to *disarm* will be thought to be as sincere as that of the Fox whose tail had been cut for all foxes in future to put aside that appendage also ; and nothing, I should think, would be less likely to invite the Germans, than the idea of preferring France to Russia when

turning to one side or the other for an ally. Let me have your opinion about all these *unctuous sayings* of this extraordinary being, and if you know, or meet with anybody, who is capable and not frightened at his shadow, or rather at that of a *sergent de ville*, let me hear what is said now at Paris."

On November 28 he writes again lamenting that he is compelled to remain at Westminster, "that I should not infinitely prefer discussing the affairs of even this *bas monde* with a kindred spirit than listen to all the stuff which is urged in favour of wasting our means in conflict with *African Cæsarism*, which is curiously alleged to be *alike* for upholding our prestige in the world and *as being incapable* of ending with profit or glory! My brother and I talked of you when I was with him the other day, and we agreed about you—but he did not tell me he had heard from you. I do not see him often, as he lives twenty miles from London. He only comes up occasionally. He is still bent upon going to Rome, which to me, unless on the ground of health, seems extraordinary. However, I delight in your letters, long or short."

On December 11 he writes in haste:—

"... I have only time to ask you for particulars and correct information about Gortschakoff's resignation, and to ask you to let me know what it all does mean. But one is prepared for anything, after M. Rouher's escapade of the other day! One does not exactly see why the Christians in Crete should be less worthy of protection than the Vicar of Christ himself, and why General Ignatieff should not say that the Turks should never send another man to defend their system of government.

"I am intensely interested at what is passing in Paris now. I should like above everything to hear your criticisms upon the different speeches, etc."

Madame Novikoff having deprecated his constant reliance upon her judgment,—she was only twenty-five and he was sixty-five,—Mr. Villiers set about reassuring her in a letter dated December 15:—

" . . . I can't make out why *you* should be mistrustful of yourself, for though you may fall short of some ideal you may yourself have created, yet that is a very different standard from that of the ordinary mortals with which you have daily to submit yourself in comparison, and which in truth ought to be to you a source of confidence. I admit fully that the more one knows the more one is appalled by one's ignorance! and the consciousness of one's *smallness* in consequence is very discouraging. Still, one does know that one is never esteemed in this world by one's merits,—at least, that is not the chief thing that the *bas monde* look to, but any number of other things besides,—and therefore, if one has only courage not to care for the living world, one may be indifferent to the opinions of its creatures. However, that kind of philosophy is not acquired in a day. All I have to say is, that it seems to me you have *very much* more ground of confidence than thousands who have it without limit, and that you do really *appear* yourself to have. I sometimes think it quite a blessing that some people do not know all the mischief which *they might do*, and I marvel at their forbearance, especially when I see the conceit of men. . . ."

There is a gap in the Villiers letters between December and February. It is bridged by the

following letter from Lord Clarendon, dated Naples, January 4, 1868:—

“DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—I trust this year may bring you every happiness you can desire, and as one can never help being a little selfish, I must for my own sake, hope that the year will not pass without giving me the pleasure of shaking hands with you again. The past year is in favour with me for having given me your acquaintance.

“Vesuvius has not put itself out, but is much less grand than a fortnight ago. Everywhere one hears of hurricanes and disasters, and the material world seems nearly as dislocated as the political—there is a general spirit of disorder and contempt for authority. Italy certainly makes no exception to the general state of things, and the Emperor, the King, and the Pope are all equally embarrassed. I know Mme. Mohl a little, and think her very original and charming. Poste Restante, Rome, will find me for the next six weeks, and I shall be too happy to get a letter from you and to know what you are about, and how you are amusing yourself in the Mother Country.—Yours very sincerely,
CLARENDON.”

Madame Novikoff was apparently uneasy about a story that Lord Clarendon's stay in Rome betokened a lurking sympathy with Roman Catholicism. She wrote to Mr. Villiers about it, and he replied February 22, 1868:—

“... I am happy to hear he is not Roman, whatever else he is. My brother is not at Paris, as you might have guessed from the papers saying that *he was*. He is yet with His Holiness, and only moves at the end of the month. We are busy now about

Lord Derby's illness, to which his position gives a particular interest. . . ."

Lord Derby, then Prime Minister, recovered. He did not die till October 1869. One year before his death he resigned office to make way for the first Gladstone Ministry, of which Lord Clarendon was Foreign Secretary.

Madame Novikoff's correspondence with Lord Clarendon was kept up till his death. In 1867 they exchanged photographs, Lord Clarendon apologising that his latest portrait dated from 1851. On October 7 he wrote to her from the Grove, Watford, a letter complimenting her upon her mastery of our language:—

"I was charmed to get your letter, and am lost in admiration of your most idiomatic English, which is really wonderful. Do tell me how and where you made yourself so perfect. Did you have an English *bonne*, or have you lived much in English society?"

On February 7, 1868, Lord Clarendon wrote to her from Rome:—

"DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—I have received and thank you much for your amusing letter of the 22nd January. I shall hope for another here, as we are likely to remain longer in Rome than we originally intended, in consequence of an event very interesting to me, and which I am therefore vain enough to hope you will care to know—our youngest daughter, Emily, is to marry Mr. Odo Russell,¹ whom you may possibly have heard of, as he is our Diplomatic Representative here and has, moreover, a sort of world-wide popularity. He is not rich in worldly goods, but

¹ Mr. Odo Russell, brother of the 9th Duke of Bedford, was born 1829, created Lord Ampthill 1881, died 1884.

very rich in all the qualities that will make a woman happy, for he is not only clever, accomplished, and well-informed, but is the most amiable and kind-hearted of men ; and of this I am sure, as I have known him since he was a boy. So Lady C. and I entrust our darling child to him with entire confidence, though (selfishly speaking) with extreme regret, as I really don't know how we shall get on without her. We must stay here that they may be together, otherwise the separation would be too long, as the marriage cannot take place before the middle of May, because my two eldest daughters have inconveniently managed to have their confinements in April, and without the presence of her sisters Emily would not consider herself lawfully married. By inflicting these family details upon you I hope I do not too much presume on your regard or your patience. Odo is Lord Russell's nephew, so I have at last got a Whig son-in-law. My two other daughters, strangely enough, are married one to the son and the other to the nephew of Lord Derby.

"We have had execrable weather, and it was just as bad at Naples as here ; but all over Europe the winter seems to have been unusually severe, and the world altogether is out of joint morally, socially, and spiritually. Italy is very sick, France is fermenting, England is uneasy, and the furor for great armaments that has seized every Government makes one tremble for the maintenance of peace, which every nation wants and desires. It is deplorable to think how the happiness and well-being of millions depend on the will, the caprice, the health even of some half-dozen individuals who accidentally rule our destinies ! The danger of war between France and Prussia is subsiding for the present, but the East has still a threatening aspect. Events there, however, can be controlled

by Russia. If she will not be too hard upon the Sultan, and make allowance for his difficulties, and will order Servia to keep quiet, and will not encourage the restless aspiration after nationality of the Slavs, all will remain quiet; but if not, and great will be her responsibility if she allows the match to be applied to the train. The Papal Government is calmly waiting for the break-up of Italy, and will, I trust, be disappointed. Lady Stanley's eldest son did turn Mohammedan, but is now, I believe, a Buddhist—he is an odd fellow but rather clever.

“Believe me very truly yours,

“CLARENDON.”

A notable letter, the first in which I find any reference to the question of armaments, a matter in which Madame Novikoff was destined to take a somewhat active interest forty years later. “The furor for great armaments” was a very slight attack of a malady which in our day has attained much more gigantic proportions. Our army and navy only cost us £25,000,000 in 1868. In 1905 they cost £66,000,000.

Madame Novikoff wrote in reply congratulating Lord Clarendon on the approaching marriage of his daughter Emily. Lord Clarendon replied:—

“DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—I have received and thank you very much for your letter of the 19th of February, which shows that by reputation you know and like Odo Russell, who really deserves the universal popularity he enjoys.

“I don't pretend to be well informed of what is passing in the world, and do not even see the newspapers regularly, as many are prohibited altogether, and others are often stopped by the police if they contain matter offensive to the Holy See; and if, therefore,

I do not quite take your view about the policy of Russia, you must attribute the difference to my ignorance. That Russia in her present circumstances should go to war or seize Turkey, or attempt any costly and hazardous operation, I think to the last degree improbable; but that she should see with the utmost confidence and resignation troubles excited in the East by others I think very likely indeed, and I cannot believe that the Prince of Servia would make these preparations for exciting war unless he had the sanction of Russia. Russia may perhaps say with a safe conscience that she did not advise such measures, but can she declare that she ever said one word to disapprove or check them? If she had done so, or would even now exert her authority, the Prince would become as tame as a mouse. I am not one of your category who 'cares not a straw for Russia,' for I know what vast elements of greatness she has, and that if she gives herself to develop her resources and consolidate her power, and does not yield to the lust of conquest, she must be the greatest nation of the world.

"Whether it be to study the Buddhism of Lord Stanley and analyse the germs it may contain of Christian doctrine, or from whatever motive, I hope you will come to England this year.—Yours very sincerely,
CLARENDON."

Into home politics Lord Clarendon did not enter much. I only find one reference. Writing on July 10, 1868, as to the impending General Election, which resulted in the return of a large Gladstonian majority pledged to disestablish the Irish Church, he wrote:—

"The question of separating the Irish Church from the State is full of difficulties. A long time must

pass before it is settled. It will play a sinister part at the coming elections, as nothing embitters politics like religion."

In 1868 Madame Novikoff paid her first visit to London, taking up her quarters with her former governess at Olga House, St. Mary's Crescent, Regent's Park. "Why do you fix your abode," Lord Clarendon wrote, "in such out-of-the-way regions?"¹ She went next year to 9 Chapel Street, Belgrave Square, where she arrived soon after Lord Clarendon had taken his seat as Foreign Secretary for the first time in the new Gladstone Cabinet. It was in this year that Madame Novikoff first crossed over to Ireland on a visit to Roxborough Castle.

None of all Madame Novikoff's correspondents were more faithful or wrote a worse hand than Mr. Charles Villiers, excepting Count Beust in the latter particular. She seems from the first to have exercised over him an influence which his friends and relations occasionally attempted to exploit. Lord Clarendon, for instance, pressed her to induce his brother Charles to accept a peerage. This, however, was beyond her powers. Mr. Villiers was proof not only to the temptation but to the subtler influences of Madame Novikoff's persuasion. "No," said he sturdily, "neither my Lord nor my Grace." Like Sidney Herbert—who, however, was induced "to see what the House of Lords will do for me in the way of diminished work"—Mr. Villiers found the House of Commons "a mighty interesting place, and well worth struggling in."

¹ Madame Novikoff appears to have a liking for Regent's Park. In later life she returned to her first love, and for several years has occupied a house in 4 Brunswick Place, Regent's Park.

If Madame Novikoff failed in her efforts to induce Mr. Villiers to accept a peerage, she was able by a happy chance to be the means of bringing him a fortune. As a more or less garbled version of this incident has been in circulation, Madame Novikoff wrote out the authentic story in a letter to a friend who seemed to be misled by these absurd legends. Here is her account of what she calls an innocent joke that made Mr. Villiers a rich man:—

“My friend, Lady Gilbert Kennedy, once told me that some thirty years ago Charles Villiers was on the point of marrying a very rich but a very plain and somewhat deformed spinster. This lady was imprudent enough one day to say to her fiancé that she knew very well he only wanted to marry her money, and not herself. Charles Villiers’ aristocratic dignity manifested itself. He took his hat, bowed to the lady, and said that after that remark there could be no more question of marriage between them. Off he went. Strangely enough, as you may think, the deserted spinster spent the next thirty years in trying in vain to see him, to make up. He never came near her, nor gave her a chance of coming near him. ‘And do you know,’ remarked Lady Gilbert, ‘she still loves him, and cherishes his memory.’ ‘Oh, that is charming, quite a romance!’ I exclaimed, ‘but I really must help. Tell the lady to lunch with me to-morrow’ (we were slightly acquainted). ‘Charles Villiers is coming.’

“No less amused than myself, Lady Gilbert delivered my message. The two met in my hotel, after which the lady humbly asked Charles Villiers to call on her. He—half amused—accepted the invitation. When we were alone together, she said,

‘Do you know, Madame Novikoff, he is not in the least altered during all these years. He is exactly the same in looks and manners.’ Of that, of course, I could have no opinion. But surely thirty years ago the old Charles Villiers was neither half bent nor half blind. However, the ex-lovers not only met, but the great intimacy of former years was soon re-established. Some weeks later she came to thank me for ‘all I had done for her happiness.’ ‘And you know,’ she said, ‘he is as charming as ever. He dines with me almost every night, and yesterday—oh, how happy I was!—he actually scolded the butler because the wine was not good! He behaved like the master of the house, and I was so happy, so very happy,’ she repeated, like a schoolgirl. The poor lady began to hope that marriage was a possibility. But Charles Villiers would not consent to such a bold step as that. A few years after that she died, leaving him the greatest portion of her very great fortune. Charles Villiers became very rich in money, but unfortunately he was then very rich also in years. At a certain age what one wants is just a little comfort, thus in the latter years of his life Charles Villiers indulged in setting up a carriage. One day he met with a very unpleasant experience. He was driving in Hyde Park when suddenly a policeman stopped his carriage and said, ‘Your coachman is a corpse; he must have been dead some minutes.’ So the policeman took the reins and drove the frightened old gentleman to his house at Cadogan Place. Notwithstanding that unpleasant incident, Villiers was glad to be able to indulge in the luxury of a private vehicle in his declining years.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE PROBLEM OF THE HEREAFTER.

UNTIL the year 1873, although Madame Novikoff carried on an extensive correspondence with statesmen and men of letters in various parts of Europe, she had made no attempt to take any part in the public discussion of the great questions of the day. It was not until 1877 that she first appeared in print, but in 1873 she had issued and circulated an anonymous pamphlet which had been suggested by a remark of Count Keyserling's.

She asked him one day how it was that all the Jewish writings had always a materialistic character. "They write," she added, "as if they never had any belief in the soul and all its idealism."

"But they have no belief in immortality of the soul—as you may prove by all the references to future life in the Old Testament. The word 'Sheol' means only a grube, a ditch, a pit, a hole; and of course there can be no soul when there is no immortality," replied the Count. He declared positively:—

"The Old Testament knows no Immortality! This is a fact which almost every student of theology understands perfectly well now, and which, at the same time, nobody outside that class appears to have the least inkling of. The Old and New Testaments are commonly spoken and thought of as *one* book—one inspired work—instead of two volumes, based on

opposite and irreconcilable principles. The doctrine of the first is principally materialistic. The doctrine of the second is purely idealistic. The Old Testament represents God as Jehovah, quite otherwise than He is pictured by Jesus Christ. God, as pictured by the Jews, manifested Himself in the terrible *Lex Talionis*, described in Exodus xxi. 24, 25 : 'Eye for eye, burning for burning, wound for wound,' whilst we are ordered by Jesus Christ to 'do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.' "

Discussion of these subjects returning often, Count Keyserling offered to write out all the passages in the Old Testament referring to the Jewish teaching of a future life—or rather, the absence of any future life. Of course that proposal was eagerly accepted, and resulted in the shape of an anonymous pamphlet, published and distributed by Madame Novikoff to a hundred different German and French theologians, including Frohschammer, Reville, Treitschke, Bluntschli, etc. The great majority of replies (and ninety of the hundred replied) she received supported entirely the views of the pamphlet—a few Roman Catholics, on the contrary, wrote vehement protests. It is a curious coincidence that the same question fascinated the mind of a man from whom Madame Novikoff was separated *toto cælo*, Cecil Rhodes, who never lost an opportunity of asking every Jew he met what his views were on the future state.

Mr. Rhodes told me that he had never met a Jew who had ever heard in the synagogue any appeal based upon the assumption that man would live after death. It is to be feared that a similar appeal addressed to attendants of Christian churches would elicit very much the same reply.

Mr. Lucien Wolff, better known as "Diplomaticus" of the *Fortnightly Review*, a very clever writer, went a step farther than Count Keyserling. While some Jews were inclined to regard the Count's thesis as a calumny, Mr. Wolff boldly maintained (*Fortnightly Review*, 1884) that the ignoring of any life beyond the confines of the visible world constituted "the central idea of Judaism."

Madame Novikoff therefore republished in 1895 the anonymous brochure of 1873 under the title *Christ or Moses? Which?* first fortifying herself by an appeal to Mr. Gladstone.

Her letter appears to have given him the mistaken impression that she was venturing on her own account into the polemical arena. Hence his reply, cautioning her against an undertaking so obviously beyond her powers :—

"HOTEL CAP MARTIN, MENTONE,
February 13, 1895.

"MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—I am sorry you have not a better adviser, but I will discharge as fairly and frankly as I can the part which you desire me to undertake.

"I do not see why the word *heresy* should be flung at you. Heresy is a very grave matter, and should not be charged except in cases where not only the subject-matter is grave, but also the whole authority of the Church or Christian community has been brought to bear. I conceive, however, that the question of Jewish opinion on a future state, as opened in the Old Testament, is a question quite open to discussion.

"I have myself been a good deal engaged latterly in examining the question of a future state, and have had occasion to touch more or less upon Jewish opinion.

The subject is very interesting, but is also large and complex, and I would advise you as strongly as I may against publishing anything upon it without a previous examination proportioned in some degree to the character of the subject. How can you safely enter upon it without some attention to the researches and the opinions of the writers who have examined it ?

“ My own state of information is by no means so advanced as to warrant the expression of confident and final conclusions. But I think there are some things that are clearly enough to be borne in mind. We cannot but notice the wise reserve with which the creeds treat the subject of the future state. After the period when they were framed, Christian opinion came gradually, I believe, to found itself upon an assumption due to the Greek philosophy, and especially to Plato—namely, that of the natural immortality of the human soul. And this opinion (which I am not much inclined to accept) supplies us, so to speak, with spectacles through which we look back upon the Hebrew ideas conveyed in the Old Testament.

“ Another view of the matter is, that man was not naturally immortal, but immortalisable. That had he not sinned, he would have attained regularly to immortality ; but after his eating from the tree of knowledge he was prevented, as the text informs us, from feeding on the tree of life, and the subject of his immortality was thus thrown into vague and obscure distance.

“ I suppose it to be a reasonable opinion that there was a primitive communication of Divine knowledge to man, but of this revelation we have no knowledge beyond the outline, so to call it, conveyed in the Book of Genesis. That outline, however, appears to show in the case of Enoch that one righteous man

was specially saved from death ; and the words of our Saviour in the Gospel give us to understand that there were at any rate glimpses of the future state underlying Jewish opinion. We must not, I think, forget the respect with which our Saviour treats that opinion.

“Nor can we forget that the Mosaic dispensation, coming as it were upon the back of the old patriarchal religion, being essentially national, was also predominantly temporal, and tended very powerfully to throw the idea of the future state into the shade.

“Nevertheless, it is, I think, generally admitted that while in certain passages the Psalmist speaks of it either despairingly or doubtfully, in some psalms the subject is approached with a vivid and growing belief, as when, for example, it is said, ‘When I awake up after Thy likeness I shall be satisfied with it.’

“You know how much upon some occasions I have both sympathised with and admired your authorship. I do not dissuade you from following up the task to which you are now drawn, but I do not think you have as yet quite reached the point at which publication would do honour to yourself or justice to your theme. And I am sure this very imperfect reply will serve to show that I do not treat your letter with levity nor try wantonly to throw obstacles in your path.

“We arrived in this beautiful spot and excellent hotel on Monday, and I write listening to the breaking of the seas below my window. Only I am rather frightened at finding it abound so much in royalties : both the Austrian in the hotel, Empress Eugenie not far off, Duchess of Leinster in the town two miles off, with I fear little or no likelihood of recovery. I shall be interested to know what you decide about

writing—with or without further study.—Believe me
sincerely yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

“Your letter dated 6th reached me yesterday.”

After the pamphlet was published Mr. Gladstone wrote :—

“November 27, 1894.

“MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—Many thanks for that most interesting book, which I have read at once in its sixteen sections (*Christ or Moses? Which?* Williams & Norgate). But my letter was quite unworthy to go beyond yourself. There is and can be no addition made to our services by the Queen or by the Government, except as regards prayer for or a succession of prayers for special days of Fast or Feast which go as routine.

“In Archbishop Laud’s devotions he has incorporated a rather long and most beautiful prayer of an Eastern saint for the Eucharistic service. I know a parson who found it there half a century ago, and has used it ever since.

“I have sent to press, and hope to publish in January, an edition of the Psalter with a Concordance.

“May I send you a copy, and to what address?—
Ever sincerely yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.”

If Madame Novikoff expected that the publication in 1895 would evoke in England anything approaching the number of weighty judgments it did in 1876, she was very much disappointed. In 1895 no one seemed to care what the Jews thought as to life Hereafter, nor indeed did they seem to care much as to whether there was any Hereafter either for Jew or for Christian.

There are several references to this controversy

in the letters published in the work *Graf Alexander Keyserling ; ein Lebensbild aus seinen Briefen und Tagebüchern von seiner Tochter Baroness von Taube* (2 vols. Berlin, George Reimer, 1902). In one of these Count Keyserling laments that Madame Novikoff was so much absorbed by the future of the East she no longer cared for the question of future life (vol. ii. p. 109).

It is doubtful whether Count Keyserling himself felt very keenly upon the subject of the next life. Writing to Madame Novikoff from Dorpat on April 8, 1865, after his return from the funeral of a colleague, he expressed himself as anything but a zealot of the other world:—

“Funeral Orations and the Future Life.—With all respect for consolations drawn from (the idea of) a future life, it seems to me that human fragility ordinarily finds in hopes terrestrial a support which is not to be disdained, and which, moreover, is within the reach of everybody. Have you ever been able to console, by depicting to him the delights of the other world, one condemned to death? To me it seems that I should not dare to exhort from this point of view any person but my own self—I should be ashamed to give on this subject any assurance for others which I was not going to confirm forthwith by my own example. Funeral orations usually satisfy nobody, and at the present moment, being myself somewhat indisposed after such an oration, to which I had to listen out of doors at the funeral of a young and highly esteemed professor, Dr. Wachsmuth, I pronounce positively in favour of the Swiss custom of burying the dead without a word. Some one has said that had there come to the mind of the Lord all the Easter sermons that have been preached, He would

never have risen from the dead, He would have fallen asleep—and if funeral orations do have any effect, maybe it is to retard the reawakening.”

Count Keyserling was always very sceptical ; Madame Novikoff was not. That which lay beyond the confines of the visible world always appealed to her. What Mr. Lucien Wolff regarded as the central idea of Judaism revolted her. Hence she was always keenly interested in all investigations into the mysterious Borderland.

It was this craving for knowledge of the unknown that brought her into friendly relations with Madame Blavatsky, the founder of the Theosophical Society, and indirectly led to the latest stage in the spiritual evolution of Mrs. Annie Besant.

It was in the year 1888 that Madame Blavatsky took up her abode in London. Madame Novikoff was charmed by her powerful intellect, which commanded her homage altogether apart from her pretension to have explored with steady foot the bewildering mazes of the occult world. She was, besides, a great Russian patriot.

Madame Novikoff wrote to me one day :—

“ I made Madame Blavatsky translate the enclosed letter for you, as I thought it so very interesting. Don't you think so ? By the bye, she is dying to see you ; so, unless you commit a murder, shall you not go there with me some afternoon ? ”

I did not respond to the appeal. My interest in occult studies, which had been stimulated by a curious prediction made at the first séance I ever attended, in 1881, had languished under the stress of mundane pre-occupations. Madame Novikoff repeated her invita-

tion more insistently than before. Even then I do not think I should have consented to go had Madame Blavatsky not been a Russian. However, to make a long story short, I went. I was delighted with, and at the same time somewhat repelled, by Madame. Power was there, rude and massive, but she had the manners of a man, and a very unconventional man, rather than those of a lady. But we got on very well together, and Madame Blavatsky gave me her portrait, certifying that I might call myself what I pleased, but that she knew I was a good theosophist.

The pleasant relations thus established with Madame Blavatsky had unexpected results. When the *Secret Doctrine* came in for review to the *Pall Mall* office I shrank dismayed from the task of mastering its contents. I took it down to Mrs. Besant, who had been for some time past attending séances and interesting herself in the other world, and asked her if she would review it. She grappled with the task, was fascinated by its contents, and when she finished her review she asked me if I could introduce her to the author. I did so with pleasure. It was from that introduction dates the latest evolution in Mrs. Besant's career. Madame Blavatsky became everything to Mrs. Besant. She was proud and glad to kneel at her feet and drink in her teachings as if they were the oracles of Divine Wisdom. When Madame Blavatsky died, Mrs. Besant was appointed her successor. She is now President of the Theosophical Society. But, humanly speaking, if Madame Novikoff had not been so insistent in making me call upon Madame Blavatsky, the Theosophical Society might never have secured the adhesion of Annie Besant.

Madame Novikoff never allowed her personal

friendship with Madame Blavatsky to be interfered with by the stories set about by her enemies as to her alleged impostures. She even wrote to Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant Duff when that Gallio was Governor of Madras in the hopes of interesting him in Madame Blavatsky's favour. The attempt was unsuccessful. I quote Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff's letter as a characteristic response to a not less characteristic appeal :—

“GOVERNMENT HOUSE, MADRAS,

November 21, 1884.

“MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—Your letter of November 1 reached me yesterday.

“I have never taken any sort of part in the Blavatsky controversies which have raged here except in so far that the Government of which I am the head has given the most peremptory orders against interference with the religious or philosophical views of the members of the Theosophical Society or of any one else.

“As for pretending to have an interest in the matters with which your friend occupies herself, I could not do it if I tried : I should as soon think of pretending to occupy myself in squaring the circle or counting the sands of the sea.

“If, however, it amuses Madame Blavatsky and her followers to occupy themselves with such things, I cannot see why they should not do so.

“Quite recently the most public attacks have been made against her and hers in a local periodical.

“If she proposes to return to Madras it would, I presume, be with a view of proceeding against the persons who have either slandered her in the most outrageous manner or else made accusations against

her which, if admitted to be true, must exclude her from the company of all persons of good character.

“ Happily, these accusations are of so definite a kind that she will, if she is what you represent her to be, not have the ghost of a difficulty in showing them to be utterly groundless and wicked inventions.

“ I am sure that I shall be only too delighted to hear that our Courts of Law have pronounced her not to have the vestige of a stain upon her character in connection with any of the doings attributed to her friends in Madras ; but, personally, I detest the whole class of subjects with which her name is connected here, and have no desire for the personal acquaintance of her or any of the persons who have made themselves conspicuous by their interest in Mahatmas, astral bodies, and the rest of it.

“ I dare say it is all very wise and very profound, but if so it belongs to intelligences of a higher order than mine. Moving on a lower plane, I always read, however, with much interest your political articles and letters. They belong to that workaday world on the surface of which I crawl, caring nothing for the holy brothers of Thibet and all the lofty prospects opened to our race by Esoteric Buddhism—Koot Hoomi and Co.—Believe me very sincerely yours,

“ M. E. GRANT DUFF.”

CHAPTER VIII.

THE OLD CATHOLICS AND PROFESSOR TYNDALL.

THE interest of Englishmen in the Old Catholic movement has of late years almost disappeared. In the United Kingdom no one speaks of them any more, but in the United States they are quite a flourishing body. Our Anglicans have grown more insular. The cult of the Eastern Church has almost died out. Twenty-five years ago it was otherwise. In those days Bishop Wordsworth, Canon Liddon, Canon MacColl, Canon Meyrick, and many others in the Church followed the movement with the keenest sympathy. Dr. Overbeck, who in his youth was a Roman Catholic, in maturer years became a Greek Orthodox and published a Review devoted to the cause of the Eastern Church. Nowadays Lord Halifax may perhaps cherish a pious aspiration towards reunion, but among the "two hundred bishops who claim the name of Catholics as they think they possess the apostolical succession,"—to quote the cruel phrase of Bishop Reinkens,—there is not one who is identified with what at one time was quite a flourishing propaganda.

When Madame Novikoff visited England in the early seventies, her interest was almost entirely ecclesiastical. The declaration of infallibility by the Œcumenical Council had created considerable excitement in Russian Orthodox circles. Many Russian



GENERAL ALEXANDER KIRÉEFF.

theologians, both lay and clerical, thought that this final development of the Roman dogma would compel the minority that stood in the ancient ways to sever their connection with a schismatical Church. The majority which had opposed the proclamation of infallibility, although numerically unimportant, was intellectually powerful. The refusal of the minority to abate any of its pretensions drove some of the members of this minority into active opposition. Professor Frohschammer, who occupied the chair of Theology at Munich University, was compelled to resign, but was reappointed Professor of Moral Philosophy. He was one of the first to protest actively against the new dogma. With him stood Professor Michaud, Weber, Bishop Reinkens, and others. Dr. Döllinger came into the movement afterwards, although from the first he had been in entire sympathy with the opponents of the infallibility decree. Madame Novikoff had met Professor Frohschammer at Marienbad, and was much impressed by his transparent sincerity, his great moral earnestness, and his keen sense of the outrage committed on Christian unity by the action of the Vatican Council. Her brother, General Kiréeff, threw himself heart and soul into the movement, and in 1871 first conferences were held between the representatives of the Greek Orthodox Church, the Old Catholics, and some Anglicans, for the purpose of ascertaining whether it was possible to secure common action against the pretensions of Rome.

General Kiréeff, after attending the Old Catholic Conference, wrote a pamphlet on the subject in which he stated the views of the Russian Orthodox Church with lucidity and force. His sister shared his enthusiasm, and as her contribution to the cause translated her brother's pamphlet into English. As we

have seen, she had previously published, for private circulation, a pamphlet drawn up by Count Keyserling discussing the question of the belief of the Jews in the immortality of the soul. The publication of the translation of her brother's pamphlet was her second step into the arena of public discussion. It was this which led directly to a closer connection with the Anglican Clergy, and indirectly to her friendship with Mr. Gladstone, which was destined speedily to have developments much more political than ecclesiastical.

As may well be imagined, Madame Olga Novikoff, brought up in the somewhat strait and rigid tenets of the Greek Church, was puzzled at what seemed to her the extraordinary anarchy of opinion which prevailed, even in high Anglican circles, on subjects which to the stricter Russians appeared matters of supreme importance. At one of the earlier Old Catholic conferences, two English bishops attended. The question under discussion was, how many Councils should be recognised as Œcumenical whose decisions were binding upon the whole Church. The Russians recognised seven, no more and no less, which were the foundation of Greek Orthodoxy. One of the English bishops said that he was willing to recognise four. The other bishop declared that nothing would induce him to accept more than two. The difference between the two Anglican ecclesiastics was a matter of much wonder to their Orthodox brethren.

In Prebendary Meyrick's *Memories of Life at Oxford and Elsewhere* there is an entry which indicates the keen critical interest which Madame Novikoff took in this question. Prebendary Meyrick says: "Madame Novikoff went to Oxford to hear a sermon which I preached there on the schism between the Eastern and Western Churches, but she was not content

with my representation of the second Council of Nicea and the Eastern use of icons."

Madame Novikoff, writing in the *New Review* many years later, placed on record her own views of the Old Catholic movement with her usual clearness and emphasis. Nothing can be more explicit than her account of her own standpoint. Her article was prompted by a preposterous statement made by Mgr. Vanutelli, an emissary from Rome who imputed to M. Pobédonostzeff, the Procurator of the Holy Synod, the remark :—

"There is no doubt that the Russian Church would unite herself to the See of Rome without the smallest difficulty if such union were decreed by the Government."

Not even in bitter irony or sarcastic response, she declared, could so grotesque an assertion have been made by any Russian, let alone M. Pobédonostzeff, and for this reason, said Madame Novikoff :—

"Greek Orthodoxy is the soul of our Government and the great link between the Government and the people. But devotion to our faith is immeasurably superior to any worldly consideration. Russia is more of a Church than a State, more of a religion than a nationality. In fact, our religion is our nationality. We are first Greek Orthodox, and then Slavs or Russians. Hence the absurdity of all these missions to subjugate us to Rome, as a detail of an arrangement between Ministers at St. Petersburg and Cardinals at the Vatican.

"It is the fashion in some quarters to speak of Russia as despotic, merely because the form of our Government is autocratic."

So far from this being the case, Madame Novikoff

maintained, "Russia stands forth as the defender of liberty against the arbitrary pretensions of the Roman Curia." This, she protested, is no paradox:—

"Russia is the champion of the most sacred of human liberties, as against the autocratic Pope who is incessantly endeavouring to enslave the conscience and the intellect of mankind. Our autocratic Tsar, wielding with the effective decisiveness of a single will the combined forces of a hundred millions of Orthodox believers, precisely protects that liberty."

Madame Novikoff then went on to point out how useful might be the influence which the Russian Orthodox Church might exercise in Western Christendom by the sympathy it showed to the Old Catholic movement. This in her eyes was part and parcel of the great campaign against the powers of darkness manifesting themselves now in the decree of Papal infallibility at Rome and again in the Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria:—

"It is twenty years since the Old Catholic movement gave rise to high hopes of a return to primitive Christianity on the part of the rational Catholics of the West. Conferences were held year after year at Bonn and elsewhere for the purpose of promoting the re-union of Christendom, down to the year 1876. In 1877, however, the crusade for the liberation of Greek Orthodox Bulgaria transferred our energies to another field of action, and theological conferences were thus interrupted. After the war the heart of the Russian people was grieved by the spectacle of the betrayal of the Orthodox brethren south of the Balkans—a betrayal which we traced to the Roman influence of Austria and the Semitic hatred of Disraeli."

From this it is evident how closely related in Madame Novikoff's mind were the two movements with which she identified herself—Old Catholicism and the Slavonic revolt against Turkish tyranny.

Mr. Kinglake in his subacid humorous fashion thus described this ante-political phase of her career, and pointed out her Old Catholic propaganda led up naturally to her subsequent Pan-Slavonic crusade:—

“It was after her long sojourn at the Russian Embassy in Vienna that Madame Olga Novikoff formed the habit of coming every year for a certain period to England; and although she almost always selected a time when the ignorant vowed there was ‘no human being in town,’ her arrival used to be marked by a simultaneous gathering of her friends, brought together by some sort of magic in that very London which people supposed to be empty, and her audience—the elders especially—used to find the glad sunshine for which they had longed in her brightness and her radiant spirits.

“Before long her splendid activity found vent in a curious Church enterprise. Acting rather, it would seem, from political motive than from any religious anxiety, she undertook to exalt and expand the ‘views’ of those who in Germany professed to stand out against Rome, and pass under the name of ‘Old Catholics.’ Her ulterior purpose, it seems, was to fuse these ‘Old Catholics’ with her own Church—the Church of the East—and to end by throwing into the cauldron all that tempting rich slice of Christendom which follows the Anglican worship.

“With English ecclesiastics she had a greater and more continuous success, for some of them under her influence gave up the ‘Filioque’ at once, whilst others

said they would rather leave its retention a kind of 'open question.'

"Before she had drawn round the globe that zone of 'Pan-Orthodox' schism, her zeal was diverted into a new channel by the course of events. She had long been imbibing at Moscow the heavenly nectar of Pan-Slav doctrine; and when Servia grew so ripe for war that the priests of the Church were already 'blessing' Prince Milan's new batteries, she began to direct her religion into a similar channel to perform the more warlike duties imposed by a Philo-Slav conscience.

"When her brother Nicholas was drawn to the scene of action, she at once placed her powerful energies on the side of his choice, and so soon as she learned how he had died at the head of his brigade, she devoted her whole heart and soul to 'the cause.'

"Nor, indeed, as we now know too well, was she powerless in advancing her purpose. It so happened that during several months the key of the position was here, because England united would have certainly prevented war, and accordingly the hope, the sole hope, of the Russian disturbers of peace was to keep our people divided. To this end Madame Novikoff largely contributed, for she not only lent animation and strength of will to a scattered political party ill-versed in foreign affairs, but, being accurate with her facts and familiar, to say the least, with the Russian side of the chess-board, she was able to give public men the sort of guidance they needed, and to save them from awkward mistakes.

"But she did more. The fine qualities that had never failed to make her society charming, enabled her to keep unimpaired the strong attachment of friends with whom she had once been acting, and though

forced by stress of new tasks to neglect her ecclesiastical duties, she not only retained the regard of the gifted Anglican Churchmen, whose faith she had moulded, but brought them with their great pulpit eloquence to reinforce the opponents of a hampered embarrassed Government. Thus, whilst Russian heart and soul, and yearning not only for war and conquest, she was also in substance a member—an able and most combative member—of that English Opposition which—thanks in part to her aid—has won its election battle, and is now, whilst we write, about to assume the coveted burthen and responsibilities of Office.

“ From her own point of view, all she did was quite fair, nay openly, fiercely straightforward, for she not only did not deceive or even attempt to cajole, but on the contrary struck out right and left against all who presumed to resist the holy Panslav crusade, and besides, in her eagerness, she makes bold to tell us some truths that St. Petersburg would like to conceal.”¹

Does the reader ask wherein Old Catholicism differs from the Roman heresy? Here is Madame Novikoff's reply :—

“ Rome goes on binding heavy burdens upon the shoulders of her slaves. The Orthodox Church, true to her great traditions, maintains only that to be the true faith which was taught by the Holy Scripture as explained by the seven Œcumenical Councils. The Old Catholics, objecting to the innovations of the Vatican, bring themselves at once into sympathetic contact with the Orthodox Church. What is it that divides Christendom? What are the barriers which stand between the Eastern and Western Churches? They are briefly four :—

¹ *Quarterly Review*, April 1880.

" 1. The procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father, as affirmed by the Orthodox Church, is asserted by the Roman to proceed also from the Son. This is due to the interpolation of the words *Filioque* in the Creed.

" 2. The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin.

" 3. The dogma of Papal Infallibility.

" 4. The doctrine of Indulgences.

" On all these four the Old Catholics are entirely at one with the Orthodox Churches of the East. The Old Catholics have recognised that the *Filioque* is an interpolation. There are, therefore, no insurmountable barriers remaining between them and us. The Swiss Old Catholics have struck the *Filioque* out of their Creed, and all the Old Catholics everywhere regard as binding upon all believers the decisions of the Seven Œcumenical Councils."

Why the Holy Synod and the Patriarchs do not recognise the fact which establishes the union of the Old Catholics with the Greek Church on all the essential points is one of the unsolved riddles of theological history.

" For no less than a thousand years," said General Kiréeff, " we have jealously kept and protected the holy truth confided to our care. Shall we bury it now, when circumstances urge us to reveal it in all its splendour, and to communicate it to other Christians? "

Answering her brother's question, Madame Novikoff declared emphatically, " We shall do what we can to help the Old Catholics wherever and whenever we can, though except their love and learning the Old Catholics can bring us nothing, nor can we offer them any worldly advantage."

Madame Novikoff practised what she preached. In the visits which she paid to Great Britain and Ireland in the years between 1868 and 1874, she carried on a brisk correspondence with at least one bishop and many ecclesiastics. I shall make but sparing use of this material, although to theologians and ecclesiastics it is interesting enough. The Bishop of Edinburgh was a very faithful correspondent. The good man seems to have been bored to death in his Scottish diocese, and to have hailed Madame Novikoff and her letters as light in a dark place. On October 16, 1872, the Bishop sends her a long report of an Episcopal Conference at Glenalmond, when four bishops solemnly debated whether or not they should receive a memorial from the clergy of one diocese complaining that the Bishop of Argyll had denied the value of Episcopal succession. "The discussion occupied some hours."

Madame Novikoff's letter describing how she had quizzed a solemn Presbyterian minister reached the Bishop when in council with his episcopal brethren. It must have been a welcome relief. He writes :—

"October 18, 1872.

"You are a wild creature! What must I do to tame you a little? It seems to me—though you do not shock *me*, because I know you better (I think) than *some* people do—that you must often meet with people like Lady Ruthven's minister, who would require many surgical operations before they make you out! I got your, to me, very acceptable note when I was at the Council at Glenalmond, a few hours after I had sent mine. I could not help laughing inwardly at the thought of the amazement that would have come over the faces of the learned and reverend

seigniors there present, if (pray forgive my even making such a supposition) I had read aloud the first few sentences of your letter."

He needed such relief pretty badly. Madame Novikoff lent him Tourgueneff's novel, *Lisa*, which "recalled in a curious way much that she had said to him." He meets the Queen Sophie of Holland, who declares herself quite captivated by Madame Novikoff, "which result often follows such audacious attempts." He groans over the "cast-iron Christianity" of such a mind as Dr. Overbeck's—a Christianity in his opinion of "a very low type indeed"—but Madame Novikoff maintains the Bishop totally misjudged the good doctor, whose deep theological science he failed to appreciate. Dr. Overbeck, the Bishop declared, had brought over to the Orthodox Church the intolerance of the Roman Communion to which he had previously belonged, and was a *bête noire* to most Anglicans. Nothing would satisfy him but that all Christians were heretics and schismatics who did not hold the primacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople as essential to the Catholicity and unity of the Church. The Bishop could not tolerate him. "The self-complacent Pharisaism of the man would be amusing if it were not sad to think that an un-Christian spirit like this animates so many."

On the other hand the Bishop is delighted with the very different spirit which animates the paper written by Colonel Kiréeff, Madame Novikoff's brother. He writes :—

"EDINBURGH, *February 9, 1873.*

"I have read Colonel Kiréeff's paper with the most entire satisfaction. The liberal Christian spirit which is manifested throughout, and the ability and

good common sense with which he deals with delicate and difficult questions, give me more hope of such a union of the East and West as is alone possible at present, a union in which the different standpoint of each is cordially recognised and duly appreciated, than anything which I have yet seen. Will you convey to him, when you have an opportunity, my hearty thanks, as a Bishop of the Anglican Communion, for this most valuable contribution to the great cause of Christian unity. I trust that some time or other I may have the privilege of making his acquaintance in Russia, but this is not likely to be for a year or two."

One more extract and I have done with the Bishop's letters. Writing to Madame Novikoff, he laments his inability to vie with her in epistolary vivacity. He says :—

" *Monday.*

" How to write anything but a prosy letter among prosy people, and indeed generally this prosy Scotland, I do not understand. Scotland is said to be ' meet nurse for a poetic child ' ; but whatever its children may be, I am sure its grown-up people, and especially its women are prosy in the extreme. So if you have ultra-solemn letters from me set it down to the air of Scotland, and to the society here generally.

" You know my feeling as to the question between the Eastern and Western Churches is this—that *union* is simply impossible at present, and not to be thought of until very considerable changes have taken place in the whole world, Western as well as Eastern. But I do think there may be much more unity, *i.e.* friendly intercommunion, and that we may look on one another, not as heretics, as Overbeck regards every one but those who exactly think with

him, but as fellow-Christians, although differing in some points of view of less importance."

The Bishop is now in the land of the Leal where the ire of offended Caledonia cannot reach him, otherwise it would have imperilled his Bishopric if not his life to publish such an aspersion upon the men and women of North Britain.

The only other extract from the letters of the theologians which I will quote is from the pen of Dr. Littledale. It gives an interesting picture of a somewhat famous scene in Sion College, when Dean Stanley went down into the arena to fight with the wild beasts of sacerdotalism, in a paradoxical attempt to claim spiritual kinship with the Old Catholics. Dr. Littledale wrote as follows in reply to her request for information :—

"April 4, 1874.

"You ask me to tell you something of Dean Stanley's amusing attempt to identify the principles and methods of the Old Catholics with those of the Rationalist school in France and England.

"Well, you know that his strength does not lie in facts or arguments, but in drawing airy analogies, wrapping them in a shining cloud of rhetoric, and bringing a number of telling illustrations to bear on the main subject.

"This was the course he pursued, as usual, at Sion College in his lecture on the Old Catholics. But he was not fated to have his own way. He was followed by a clergyman of his own school, who was indiscreet enough to adduce Professor Frohschammer's name as proof that the Old Catholics are what the Dean alleged.

"This called up an Old Catholic then present who

demolished the Dean in a powerful speech, vindicating the historical and anti-Rationalist basis of the Old Catholic Programme. There were other speeches to the same effect and I had my share of the proceedings. But I chiefly dealt with the paragraphs in which the Dean ridiculed the supposed good understanding between English High Churchmen and Old Catholics as being merely external and momentary, not denoting any real unity of dogma in feeling. It was, he said, like two parties of travellers crossing a mountain, and meeting as one was ascending from the base and the other descending from the summit. They meet indeed, but so that the descending party is bathed in perspiration, and faint with heat, while the other is freezing with cold at the very same spot, as they pass, never to meet again. This parable drew down much applause, so I determined to answer it, and said that there was indeed some truth in it, for one school was coming down from bleak and barren heights of mere scientific opinion, where no plant of faith could grow, and where the air was too rarefied for man to breathe with health and comfort, while the other was ascending from the close and unhealthy valley of superstition, with its marsh of stagnant abuses and its rank growth of spiritual weeds. But the climbers had no mind to starve on the top, nor the descenders any wish to get fever and ague at the bottom. Rather both would join together on some table-land midway, high enough to be swept by wholesome breezes, and low enough to be warm and fertile, and there they would rest, not for a mere halt and parting, but to build their hamlet together, and dwell as brothers in union thenceforward. That is the gist of what I said, and I think it weakened the telling effect of Dean Stanley's clever illustration.

“ The Tsar is, as you know, coming to London in May. It has been suggested to Lord Eliot, President of the Association for the Reunion of Christendom (of which I enclose a paper), that it would be well for the Association to present an Address to His Majesty, with the view of interesting him in its objects.

“ Having regard to the Tsarina’s recent message and gift to Mr. Hatherley, I do not know how far such an address would be acceptable to the Tsar, and should be deeply obliged if you could ascertain for me through your brother, or some other means, if His Majesty would receive such an Address favourably, and if it would help forward or retard the Cause of Reunion. The Royal Family here know and care nothing about it, and our Queen, if she have any fixed religious opinions, is a Presbyterian, and not any longer a Member of the Church of England. If your advice is to let the matter drop, we shall do so, not otherwise. I should be glad of a reply soon, that the Address may be drawn up and signed in good time. *Christos Voskress.*—Faithfully yours,

“ R. F. LITLEDALE.”

With this characteristic letter we may let the curtain fall upon the busy and earnest men, the Meyricks, the Palmers, and many others of that ilk with whom Madame Novikoff consorted much in those days, attending Church conferences, preachings, and endless discussions, now of little interest even to Madame Novikoff herself.

It is necessary to bear in mind the anti-Roman standpoint of Madame Novikoff, in order to understand how it was she found so easy an access to the heart of many English Liberals. If Mr. Gladstone had not been a High Churchman, her mission would have

been infinitely more difficult. But when she came to England she received a warm welcome among a very influential section of both Churchmen and statesmen who found themselves in warm sympathy with one who shared so intensely their distrust of Rome.

After her first affiliation in England among the Anglicans she found herself at home among the Free-thinkers. To her introduction to Kinglake and her lasting friendship with the historian of the Crimean War I shall refer in the next chapter. But the sincere sympathy with independence of thought and courageous fidelity to conviction which led her to support the Old Catholics against Rome, brought her into close alliance with one notable man who was disdainfully ignorant of the dogmas of the Churches. In the year 1873 Professor Tyndall created an immense sensation by his brilliant Presidential Address at the meeting of the British Association at Belfast.

The hubbub which it occasioned, following as it did upon his challenge in the *Nineteenth Century* for the institution of a prayer gauge, was immense. Nowadays it is difficult to conceive such a commotion. No scientific man familiar with the phenomena of auto-suggestion would hazard Tyndall's challenge. Since he delivered his address a brand-new religion—that of Christian Science—has sprung into existence, which lives and flourishes upon the continually renewed demonstration of precisely that factor in the healing of disease which Professor Tyndall challenged the religious world thirty-five years ago to demonstrate if it could. But Mrs. Eddy was then unknown, and the pious folk not daring to believe that the existence of this faculty of healing could be proved, made such a clamour against Professor Tyndall as to rouse not unnaturally a strong sympathy in Madame

Novikoff's mind with the much-abused scientist, although she did not share his opinions any more than his assailants. In her *Souvenirs*, published in the *Nouvelle Revue*, she has told the story of her first meeting with Tyndall:—

“It was a lovely December day; no wind, no smoke, no fog—almost a Russian winter day minus the gorgeous diamonds cut by nature, and commonly called ‘snow.’ The sun, instead of blushing modestly into a deep red, and concealing its rays, shone generously and frankly upon all London. There could be no better day for a long healthy stroll in one of the beautiful parks of which every Londoner may be proud, and great was my satisfaction when Kinglake’s visit was announced to me. Prompted by my usual egotism, and without any further ado, I asked him to come at once with me towards the shores of the picturesque Serpentine.

“‘You seem to be in a great hurry,’ he remarked good-naturedly; ‘though, surely, nobody has set it on fire yet,’ added he, smiling; ‘but I always obey a lady’s orders. Well, andiamo!’ So off we went.

“But it was not enough to ‘eat the fresh air,’ nor admire the trees, nor discuss the weather. I wanted particularly to know Kinglake’s views upon Tyndall’s beautiful Belfast address, which fascinated me greatly, though it certainly expressed anything but my religious creed. Still, I must confess, I was struck with its courageous outspokenness and artistic brilliancy. This address seemed to me the work of a poet, rather than that of a philosopher or theologian. Somehow it seemed to me that, however wrong was the author’s theology, his nature had a loftiness and a generosity



Photograph by Elliott & Fry.]

PROFESSOR JOHN TYNDALL.

which I was accustomed to connect with the purest Christianity.

"I spoke perhaps too enthusiastically, but here Kinglake interrupted me. 'Pray remember I am a heathen. I dislike churches, and had I my way,' added he, with a twinkle in his eye, 'I would write on every church, chapel, and cathedral, only one line—"Important, if true." As for philosophy, with all its objective and subjective theories, with all its "categorical imperatives," I patronise it still less'—this time smiling outright. 'I admit categorical imperatives only from a woman I like. But, look! here is the very man you will be pleased to know, I am sure. Here is Tyndall himself, and he will explain everything you want to hear.' With these words he took the newcomer by the hand, and the acquaintance was made—an acquaintance which will never be forgotten.

"At that time I generally was 'at home' after dinner, from nine to twelve, according to our Russian fashion, by which, without specifying any day, people are allowed to drop in when it pleases them. With me, however, only the elect were invited, and Tyndall naturally belonged to that category. Each time he came was a new pleasure to me, but especially when he was in a poetical mood and recited by heart, which with his strikingly melodious voice and remarkable memory he did to perfection.

"One evening he came and found me alone, or, rather, only in company with several books just received from a great Munich friend of mine,—Professor Frohschammer.

"To my surprise Tyndall knew nothing either of the books or of the life of that remarkable scholar; he asked me to give him a general idea of both, not

an easy task, to be sure. But I marked several passages in the work on *The Right of Independent Conviction* (*Das Recht der eigenen Ueberzeugung*), *Das Christentum Christi und das Christentum des Papstes*, and several others which were considered by the author as the foundation of the Old Catholic movement. The initiative of that splendid protest against Rome belongs more to Döllinger, but Frohschammer undoubtedly was one of its first advocates. Later on, carried away by the stress of rationalism, he left every definite creed, whilst the Old Catholics, now represented by Rector Michaud (editor of the *Revue Internationale Théologique*, Berne) and others, are more and more being drawn towards the primitive orthodox faith, such as it was before Rome introduced the Filioque doctrine and other new dogmas, contrary to the seven Œcumenical Councils.

“Tyndall patiently listened to all these details, then, putting aside one by one all the volumes, promised to read them carefully. ‘Tell me his biography!’ he exclaimed. ‘How did he come to hold these views? Did you not tell me that he took Holy Orders?’ ‘So he did,’ I explained in reply. ‘His life has been a very hard one, full of struggle and privations. An orphan depending entirely on a remote relation, who was an old fanatical priest, the boy had no choice. He craved for books and learning, and begged to be sent to school. This was granted on condition that he should devote his life to the Roman Church. The child naturally consented, and studied theology with such brilliant success that he soon obtained an appointment as a Universitäts prediger and Professor of Philosophy.

“‘But the more he matured in study and meditation, the more he felt that truth was not religiously

adhered to by the Holy See. Silence under such circumstances became intolerable, and he began publishing pamphlets which not only made a stir in Rome, but were severely criticised and all put upon the Index.

“ ‘Frohschammer, naturally, was thus compelled to give up his parish. This deprived him of his living and of his uncle’s support, but not of his craving for truth. He continued to work on. But once, as he was finishing one of his straightforward rebukes to Rome, he was struck with a kind of paralysis which rendered him half blind.

“The Holy See then forbade Roman Catholic undergraduates to attend his lectures on philosophy, and as there were hardly any students of any other persuasion at Munich University this meant ruin to Frohschammer’s career as a professor. Nevertheless, he still worked on for conscience’s sake, as if ignoring all the terrible conditions of a blind man’s solitude. Occasionally his housemaid read to him, but it is easy to guess the way in which she must have deciphered some of the terms contained in his scientific books. This, however, often made my poor friend smile, and only added to his collection of amusing anecdotes about his ‘literary help.’

“Tyndall seemed interested in this very incomplete and fragmentary sketch of mine, and left me rather suddenly, carrying away with him all Frohschammer’s books, and promising again to study them carefully.

“Next day the post brought me a letter from Tyndall and a cheque of one hundred pounds sterling with a few lines only—

“ ‘What I heard from you about your poor Munich friend, and all I found in his works, has so deeply impressed me that I beg you to forward him this

cheque as a little help and as a token of my sympathy.'

"I was naturally much touched by such spontaneous generosity, but knowing Frohschammer's independent character I returned the cheque, asking Tyndall to do something more to his liking. 'Let your English readers know him and his works through your kind introduction,' said I. 'Now that everybody is reading your Belfast address, and that you are printing its sixth edition, could you add a few lines about him?'

"Kind Tyndall promised, and did it at once, in his clever, delicate, and charming way.

"This happened a little before my departure for Russia. My direct route lay *via* Berlin, but having some misgivings about the part I had played in this transaction I resolved to return home *via* Munich, in order to see Frohschammer, which I did.

"I told him about the £100 cheque, and the liberty I took in depriving him of so large a sum. 'That is quite impossible! I have never had such a big sum in all my life,' interrupted he.

"No sooner had I finished my story than he exclaimed, 'Thank you heartily for having anticipated my feelings. Yes, Tyndall has done me the greatest kindness I could have desired, which I will always remember. You have understood me quite well.'

"Cruel death has deprived the world of these two remarkable men almost simultaneously. Frohschammer died a few months before his generous friend and helper.

O. K."

Madame Novikoff, who never does things by halves, set herself diligently to the task of making Professor Frohschammer's pamphlet known to all her

friends. Among others she sent the pamphlet to Mr. Gladstone, asking him whether he did not think that it would be well to have it translated into English. Mr. Gladstone replied as follows :—

“ July 23, 1875.

“ MY DEAR MRS. NOVIKOFF,—I have to thank you for your note, and for several copies of Professor Frohschammer’s tract. I read it, and I agree as to its value. But I doubt whether a translation into English would circulate widely, unless it were undertaken by some association, partly because translations usually move but heavily, partly because the author’s position would give rise to misgivings. I follow the religious questions of the Continent with deep interest, and I think you Easterns have it now in your power to make or mar much. Even in Italy there is a stir, and there are recent incidents of very great interest. I have made no plans for the summer as yet. With my wife’s kind regards.—Ever yours,

“ W. E. GLADSTONE.”

That Mr. Gladstone should take the keenest interest in Madame Novikoff as the advocate of the Old Catholic movement toward the reunion of Christendom was natural. He wrote her many years later (in 1894):—

“ My interest in the Old Catholics is cordial. A sister of mine died in virtual union with them after having been Roman for over thirty years.

“ I remember suggesting to Dr. Döllinger that their future would probably depend in great measure upon their being able to enter into some kind of solid relations with the Eastern Church. And I earnestly hope this may go forward. Dr. Döllinger agreed in this opinion. They may do great good, and prevent

the Latin Church by moral force from further extravagances.”

Mr. Gladstone's interest in the movement was ecclesiastical and theological. Professor Tyndall, who cared for none of these things, was attracted to Professor Frohschammer because of the protest which he made in favour of liberty of thought.

Mr. Bernhard Munz says that Madame Novikoff “carried on a lively correspondence with Frohschammer, and after she had read with pleasure my *Study of Jakob Frohschammer, the Philosopher of World-wide Imagination* (Breslau, 1894), and the *Letters from and about Frohschammer*, which I edited (Leipzig, 1897), she was kind enough to place her letters from him at my disposal. She wrote to me:—‘I am greatly enjoying your work upon my very great friend, whom the world has not sufficiently appreciated. You make him live again. . . . I authorise you to publish all the letters in extenso.’ When I am able I shall gladly avail myself of this permission, for the letters to Madame Novikoff are valuable as completing and enriching those already published.” Which explains the absence of any of Frohschammer's letters from this collection.

In going through the letters which Professor Tyndall wrote to Madame Novikoff, there are very few in which he departs from the reserve which he imposed upon himself. Here is almost the only touch of personal feeling in his correspondence. The date is not given, nor the letter to which it is a reply. It is brief, but eloquent in its brevity:—

“I shall forget you just as little as you will forget me. For you are not one to be readily forgotten. Bright, cultivated, natural, honest, these are qualities

which seize upon a plain, blunt fellow like myself, and hold a place in his memory. I could say more, but I won't.—Yours ever,
JOHN TYNDALL."

Mr. Kinglake, whose delight was to find that other men appreciated Madame Novikoff as much as he did himself—for jealousy was not in his nature, the friendship he enjoyed he loved to share with all his friends—wrote her an amusing letter on hearing of Professor Tyndall's marriage (to Miss Louisa Hamilton), from which the following is an extract :—

"I heard of Tyndall's marriage the day I last wrote to you, as of course I immediately saw that he was marrying in order to secure a chaperon for life, and I have no doubt he will be much better protected than he was under my gentle guardianship. I remember that once I was so negligent of my duty as chaperon that I left him tête-à-tête with a lady. But never again will that happen as long as Mrs. Tyndall lives !

"It seems that at that Royal Institution, or whatever the place is called, young women hasten up to the *lecturers* as priests of science, and go to them after the lecture in what a Churchman would call the vestry, and express charming little doubts about electricity, and a pretty gentle disquietude about the solar system, and then the professors have to give explanations, and then somehow at the end of a few weeks they all find that they have provided themselves with chaperons for life.

"But, dear friend, I must end as I began, and entreat you to give me better news of your health.—
Your affectionate,
A. W. K."

Madame Novikoff was a capital correspondent for a man like Professor Tyndall. Familiar with many

eminent savants on the Continent, she delighted in introducing them to her English friend. Here is one letter typical of many others:—

“ROYAL INSTITUTION,
October 20, 1878.

“I thank you exceedingly for the opportunity you have so kindly given me of reading the letter of Professor Riehl. It is one of those solid earnest utterances which give me incomparably greater pleasure than the cheers of the newspapers, rare as those latter may be. I am much gratified to learn that he has thought the *Fragments of Science* worth reading. It costs time to produce even *Fragments*, and I should never have permitted myself to be deflected even to this slight extent from my original inquiries did I not think the diffusion of sound science among the community at large to be of unspeakable importance at the present time. I sought in all honesty to make my own mind clear as to the subjects on which I wrote, and as far as in me lay to convey the same clearness to others. But no man is a proper judge of his own work; and it is therefore peculiarly gratifying to find one so eminently competent to form an opinion upon the subject speaking so favourably, and indeed so kindly of me and my work, as Professor Riehl has done in this letter.

“I was not ‘brilliant’ last night—but everybody else was,—Sergeant Parry in particular, and I enjoyed *their* brilliancy, to which *my* dulness was a foil.

“I am going up to-day to have a mutton chop with Mrs. Faraday, but I hope to be able to call to see you to-morrow.”

The only other letter from Professor Tyndall which I quote sounds the personal note, always more

permanently interesting than politics or science. Madame Novikoff's only son has never been of robust health, and ever and anon she was alarmed by hearing that he was unwell. On one of these occasions she appears to have mentioned her trouble to Professor Tyndall, who replied as follows :—

“ *January 14* (year uncertain, probably 1874).

“ DEAR FRIEND,—I am in the midst of my preparations for a lecture, but I turn aside to write to you. Your letter reached me last night. Accept my cordial sympathy, but you may be too much cast down about your boy. I had twice over, when young, inflammation of the lungs. I could plainly see that the two physicians who attended me had little hopes of my life. One of them said to me when I was recovering, ‘ John, you will never be secure from attacks of inflammation.’ Well, from that hour to this I have known nothing of the kind. And I hardly think any man in England has tried his lungs, or indeed any of his internal organs, more severely than I have tried mine. They have been subjected to the iciest air and the hardest work of the Alps. This I think ought to cheer you.

“ Frohschammer has just sent me his friendly review. I will write to him on Saturday or Sunday. My Preface appears to have silenced them ; they seem somewhat ashamed of themselves. One thing is very noticeable, that while religion in many cases exalts natural nobleness, and strengthens the spirit of self-sacrifice, in other cases it has a purely evil influence, making the base tenfold more base. Some of them *lie* without remorse to gain their ends with an adversary.

“ Auberon Herbert is the brother of Lord Carnarvon,

a very pure, good, well-meaning Radical, but not an over-strong young man.

“ You write to me sometimes as if I were ungrateful for your kindness,—this is not the case ; my *seeming* neglect and delay arise wholly from my heavy work, and, though you will not believe me, my bad brain. Had nature given me the capacity of resting that brain by sleep I might have really approached what you suppose me to be—I might have made my mark in the world. But as it is I am like a climber in the mountains who has to depend upon a broken leg. At rare intervals I feel what I might have been had the power that rules human destinies been propitious to me. But I will not complain,—I have only too much reason to be content.—Good-bye for the present, ever yours faithfully,
JOHN TYNDALL.”



Photograph by Elliott & Fry.]

A. W. KINGLAKE.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. KINGLAKE.

IF in order of time Count Keyserling was the first philosopher, Count Beust the first statesman, Professor Frohschammer the first theologian, Professor Tyndall the first scientist in the list of Madame Novikoff's friends, Mr. Kinglake, the historian of the Crimean War, was the first man of letters. The first, and one who was faithful to the last. Madame Novikoff in her *Souvenirs* in French, and Canon Tuckwell in his *Life of Mr. Kinglake* (Blackwood), have dealt so fully with this subject that it is unnecessary to do more than quote what has been written with a few elucidations and supplementary remarks.

I quote first from the lively description given by Madame Novikoff of her first meeting with Kinglake at Holland House in the year 1873 :—

“ Few people will disagree with me, I expect, when I say that Lady Holland, widow of the fourth Lord Holland, of Holland House, was the very type of a woman of the world, full of social tact, savoir faire, with just a tinge of scepticism and haughtiness. Lady Holland was certainly rather foreign in her ways, ‘ not insular enough,’ according to some old-fashioned Britons. But, being a thorough unconventional Muscovite myself, I fully pardoned her that short-coming. In fact, I never call to mind, without pleasant

feelings, her Sunday dinner-parties. She seemed to prefer that day for all her gatherings, quite ignoring the righteous indignation of some rigid Sabbatarians.

"These Holland House dinner-parties had another peculiarity; men were never allowed to remain over their wine and cigars, and to gossip *soi-disant* politics, which I am told in reality amounts to discussing their female friends. The dining couples, once united by the hostess, could divorce each other only on returning to the drawing-room from whence they started; this law admitting no exception. The first time I went to one of these parties I had the good fortune to be taken in to dinner by Lord Houghton (né Monckton-Milnes), poet and man of letters, author of *The Monographs*, etc. On my right hand I had the author of the *Crimean War*, who, however, will probably live much longer in the memory of the reading world as the delightful writer of *Eothen*.

"I remarked to my neighbours how fortunate I was to have such good sources of historical information so near at hand.

" 'It is kind of you to say so,' remarked Kinglake, speaking very gently and almost inaudibly; 'but as to historians, they are sometimes very badly treated.'

" 'What do you mean?' asked I, rather puzzled.

" 'Well,' continued Kinglake quietly, as if discussing some grave topic, 'just take my case, for example. As you know, I am supposed to be an historian. The other day I got a letter which really touched me; with deep black borders, it was signed by two people, husband and wife, and came from one of our colonies. They described their grief. Their only child, it seemed, had been killed in the Crimea. For some incomprehensible reason they were most anxious to have "their beloved darling" mentioned in my *History of*

the Crimean War. Surprised but flattered, I replied by return of post—a thing I have not done for many, many years—that I would be happy to do my best for their comfort, provided they sent me the necessary particulars. Again a letter, with the same black borders, written and signed by both mother and father, arrived, but with the following cruel addition: “We have no particulars whatever to give you. He was killed on the spot, like many others, but anything you may kindly invent will be welcome; we leave it entirely to your imagination.”

“No sooner had Kinglake finished his story than we were interrupted by a loud voice from the other end of the table, where sat the quasi-poet and fine critic, Hayward; telling some anecdotes, as usual piquant, but, I am sorry to say, not always quite proper. Lady Holland seemed amused, and so were many of her guests. I felt rather embarrassed; but of course tried not to show it to my neighbours.¹ In order to say something I remarked to Kinglake, who had mentioned to me his intimacy with the ‘naughty

¹ It was Hayward’s licence at the dinner-table, which embarrassed Madame Novikoff as much as it pleased Lady Holland, that led Kinglake always to address her in his letters as “My dear Miss.” Canon Tuckwell says:—

“Those letters, all faithfully preserved, I have been privileged to see; they remind me, in their mixture of personal with narrative charm, of Swift’s *Letters to Stella*; except that Swift’s are often coarse and sometimes prurient, while Kinglake’s chivalrous admiration for his friend, though veiled occasionally by graceful banter, is always respectful and refined. They even imitate occasionally the ‘little language’ of the great satirist; if Swift was Presto, Kinglake is ‘Poor dear me’; if Stella was M.D., Madame Novikoff is ‘My dear Miss.’ This last endearment was due to an incident at a London dinner-table. A story told by Hayward, seasoned as usual with *gros sel*, amused the more sophisticated English ladies present, but covered her with blushes. Kinglake perceived it, and said to her afterwards, ‘I thought you were a hardened married woman; I am glad you are not; I shall henceforth call you Miss.’”—*Life of Kinglake*.

Hayward,' that he and his friend differed very much in their manners. Kinglake smiled: 'I think we do. But the other day I called on him, and his old housemaid said, "Come in, sir. Mr. Hayward is always glad to see you; and no wonder, you are so very like each other, just as if you were children of the same mother."' "

" 'Well,' said I, 'has Disraeli not somewhere compared the silent, mysterious Venetian gondolas to your rattling hansoms? ' "

" 'Just so,' rejoined Kinglake; 'but we both agree in one case; I am as desirous as he is to call on you, if allowed.' "

"This was the commencement of my friendship with Kinglake."

"Material liking," says Canon Tuckwell, "ripened into close friendship. During her residences in England few days passed in which he did not present himself at her drawing-room in Claridge's Hotel; when absent in Russia or on the Continent, she received from him weekly letters, though he used to complain that writing to a lady through the *poste restante* was like trying to kiss a nun through a double grating."

Again to quote from her reminiscences, Madame Novikoff says:—

"His first visit to me seemed likely to nip our acquaintance in its very bud. In a certain sense it was a perfect failure. Just as Kinglake called and had begun talking to me about Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, whom he continued to call 'the great Eltchi,' in came Lady E. I introduced my visitors to each other, according to our Russian fashion.

" 'Mr. Kinglake!' exclaimed she, 'the great

author? So glad to meet you! I want you to come to my ball. Some royalties are sure to be there. There is really no good ball without royalties,' added she, to our great amazement, 'but in our democratic days I am glad to have celebrities as well. I am a great admirer of your works, Mr. Kinglake. But tell me, are you in favour of Louis Napoleon or opposed to him? Do you admire him?'

"Poor Kinglake, rather bewildered and looking like a dying dove, answered slowly:—

"'I am afraid I cannot exactly say that I admire him particularly.'

"'Don't you? Well, after all, that does not matter much. Now I must go; I never pay long visits.'

"Off she went—not a minute too soon.

"'The dear old lady must have only platonic love for your books,' said I, 'and has not possessed herself of their contents, or she would remember your graphic picture of Louis Napoleon as a man whose two hands write simultaneously in quite opposite directions, and many other severe remarks on the Emperor.'

"'I generally only inspire platonic affections,' remarked Kinglake, good-naturedly, and we both laughed.

"Still, I was rather vexed to afford him such poor company. If he shares the French views of '*Dis moi qui te hante, je dirai qui tu es*,' thought I, he will never call on me again. Fortunately, he not only came again, but in the course of the winter became a daily caller. For some of the people he met he certainly had no great liking. One of them was a bishop. His lordship—solemn as a butler, yet sweet, oh, so desperately sweet that you would give a kingdom for a slice of lemon after an hour's inter-

course with him!—somehow jarred on his nerves. Whenever he found me alone he was sure to ask, ‘Is Peter Paul, Bishop of Claridge’s, coming soon?’ It was a standing joke, which somehow always amused me. His other pet aversion was an old diplomatist of European fame, who actually had done some useful work in life, but, unfortunately, had a curious soprano voice, rather piercing, and who uttered his words so quickly, especially when he endeavoured to speak English, that poor Kinglake, who was already rather deaf, could never follow him. This dear ‘dip’ was always called the ‘Penny Trumpet,’ and his appearance was the signal for Kinglake’s exit from my rooms.

“He found me once surrounded with children’s books which I was going to send as Christmas presents. To my amusement he took one of them, *The Book of Nonsense*, and said: ‘This is for my benefit. I will write here my own inspirations, unless you object.’ I willingly consented, and in the course of a whole winter’s season, whenever we were alone, he would write down some nonsense verses. The most charmingly absurd are those in which I am described, and which he signed ‘Peter Paul, Bishop of Claridge’s’—the name followed by the picture of a mitre.”

(I interrupt Madame Novikoff’s narrative to make a few excerpts from this rollicking book of nonsense, verses to which Kinglake was by no means the only contributor. Kinglake, however, wrote most of the rhymes. I remember one which trenches somewhat on Hayward’s domain.)

“There is a young lady of Claridge’s,
Whose smile is more pleasing to me
Than the raptures of ninety-nine marriages
Could possibly, possibly be—
Peter Paul, Bishop of Claridge’s.”

In answer to some pretended rebuff received by the Grand Duke Constantine from a girl at Ryde he writes:—

“ There was a young lady of Ryde, so awfully puffed up by pride,
 She felt grander by far than the son of the Tsar,
 And when he said, ‘ Dear, come and walk on the pier,
 Oh, please come and walk by my side ’ ;
 The answer he got was ‘ Much better not,’ from that awful
 young lady of Ryde.”

That Grand Duke came in for another share of Kinglake’s more ambitious, or at least more lengthy, effusions.

“ THE GRAND DUKE OF RYDE.

“ There was a Grand Duke of Ryde,
 Grand Constantine Nikolaivitch,
 From one of the Russias—I don’t know which—
 Who came to see if our fleet,
 Was one he could easily beat.
 When he saw our ships at Spithead
 He at first thought them strong, but he presently said :
 “ It is only, thank God, to war-loving nations
 That Heaven grants Wellesleys and Nelsons ;
 Men grovelling in mere peaceful pursuits
 Breed only political brutes,
 Like XXX and XXX and XXXX,
 And XXX and XXX and XXXX,
 And XXX and XXX and XXX,
 And the infamous XXXX and XXX and XXX.
 Yes, old England has fallen sadly low,
 And she does not show me her Nelson,
 Because she’s no Nelson to show.
 If opposed to such a Commander
 As that man I see on the Pier¹
 The Russians, I venture to think,
 Would none of them have much to fear.
 Oh, how gladly we’d meet
 The whole English fleet
 If commanded by Admiral Goose,
 Said that eagle-eyed Grand Duke of Ryde.”

¹ An English admiral, since deceased.

The interest in this preposterous, broken-backed jingle lay in the names left blank, which each reader filled in for himself according to his political predilections.

Among other contributors to the Novikoff *Nonsense Book* was Count Frédro, then at Weimar, who inscribed himself under rhymes which are interesting as recalling the admiration which the great Liszt entertained for her singing :—

“ Your friend, the fair lady at Claridge’s,
 What she does now you all want to know ?
 She charms a Grand Duke, and her carriages
 In Weimar they make a great row ;
 She sings to great Liszt, who disparages
 All singers who don’t sing like her,
 And then the fair lady of Claridge’s
 She says to him : ‘ Ich danke mein Herr ’ ! ”

One of the longest of these rollicking effusions, which show at least the jollity and high spirits which reigned in her salon in these old days, was the following, from the pen of the painter Sir Noel Paton :—

“ TO THE FAIR LADY OF CLARIDGE’S.

“ There was a fair lady at Claridge’s,
 But who knows where now she can be ?
 Or freezing in lone railway carriages,
 Or tossed on a billowy sea ?

Or sledging o’er Russia’s far ridges,
 Or warbling in Austrian salons,
 But no more her admirers round Claridge’s,
 Wits, Bishops, Historians throng.

And a cloud has come down upon Claridge’s,
 The waiters flit doleful as mutes,
 Not the odd shoes of ninety-nine marriages
 Could rap a smile even out of Boots.

O'er mine host, as he smokes his cigar, age is
 Rushing with telegraph speed,
 Oh, the glory's departed from Claridge's,
 And life seems as spent as his need.

For the shrine's mute and vacant at Claridge's,
 Yet still round the desolate nest,
 As the wide driven tide on a bar rages,
 Our thoughts crowd in yearning unrest.

And each all the others disparages,
 And vows for him only she smiles,
 While oblivious of them and of Claridge's,
 New victims by scores she beguiles."

Among the contributors to the album was the
 Hon. R. Bourke, at one time Under-Secretary for
 Foreign Affairs. He wrote:—

"We've heard enough of Panslavism—
 (A word I can't admire),
 Change it, oh Tsar! to Olgarism,
 Of that—I ne'er will tire.

August 30, 1882.

ROB. BOURKE."

Another quotation runs as follows:—

"Devotion to her Faith is her life's work,
 Her praises all her country to the Volga fill,
 And not the only Englishman is Mr. Bourke
 Proud to profess himself an ardent Olga-phil."

Dismissing these amusing trifles, I resume my quotations from Madame Novikoff's *Souvenirs*:—

"I sometimes had musical parties, one of which was favoured with Kinglake's presence. He came unobserved, took a chair in the corner of the room, and remained as silent as a mouse all the time. I expressed my satisfaction at seeing him. 'You seem to be fond of music,' said I. 'But which music do

you prefer ?—purely classical, or Wagner or Chopin ? I am afraid you know nothing about our great Glinka.'

" 'In a certain sense I am musical,' replied he ; ' but only in one sense.'

" 'Tell me your taste exactly,' I continued. ' I will put Beethoven, or any one else, at your disposal next time ; you understand me ? '

" 'Partly,' rejoined Kinglake, with a serious face, but laughing eyes. ' I consider music a very useful element in life. It certainly has an educational influence which is very precious.'

" 'So it has,' exclaimed I. ' Undoubtedly, it is a great, beneficent element, and one of our superiorities over the quadrupeds,' added I jokingly.

" 'No, pardon me. That I cannot endorse,' remarked Kinglake, with that twinkle of his eyes which was his peculiar characteristic. ' Dogs howl sometimes very loudly, you know. Frankly speaking, I only care for the drum.'

" 'Oh !' rejoined I, ' if you are not better than the Shah of Persia, who preferred the tuning of the orchestral instruments to their united harmonies, I shall consider this explanation as final, and will warn you off whenever I have music again ;' which I did invariably. ' But if so, what on earth was the " educational influence " you referred to ? ' asked I.

" 'Well,' explained he, smiling mischievously, ' nothing exercises my patience better.'

" Soon after this explanation there was a musical party at Harrington House. Several amateurs gave songs, and my turn came. I at first refused, but yielded on being pressed. I chose the shortest song I knew, and quickly finished. To my surprise, Kinglake complimented me on my performance. ' Surely,'

exclaimed I, 'my voice did not remind you of your favourite drum?'

" 'No; but don't you see, when others begin they never stop, whilst your singing always comes to an end.'

" Kinglake was the kindest of friends, and was always the first to be told of all joys or troubles. But once I saw him really angry with me. I had been dining with Count Beust the night before. Kinglake, or (as I and my other friends used to call him) 'Eothen,' came at his usual hour, and asked how I liked my party at the Embassy? 'Oh, very much indeed,' I replied. 'Mr. Gladstone took me in to dinner, and we talked a great deal, first of the Old Catholic movement, which he sincerely admires; then of Döllinger. Mr. Gladstone exhibited a remarkable knowledge of the Eastern Church and her superiority over Romanism; then of you and your books.'

" No sooner had I uttered these words than Kinglake jumped from his chair. He—usually such a 'downright slow-coach,' as he called himself; he so very quiet and gentle in his manners—began pacing excitedly up and down the room.

" 'Why have you done this?' exclaimed he. 'Why have you mentioned me? Had you no better subject?'

" I was startled. 'Why not?' I asked in return. 'I never conceal either my friends or my friendships.'

" 'But you ought never to have mentioned me to Gladstone. He dislikes me, and it may do you harm in his opinion.'

" If this was not kind, I do not know what kindness means."

Of her innumerable conversations with Kinglake

Madame Novikoff has preserved but a few fragments. She says :—

“ It may not be generally known, but his *History of the Crimean War*, his labour of twenty-six years, his *magnum opus*, was in reality nothing but a token of gratitude to Lord Raglan. Being a civilian, Kinglake, when expressing a wish to accompany the expedition to the Crimea, met with great opposition from the military authorities, in spite of which, however, Lord Raglan took him there.

“ In return for this friendly act, Kinglake determined to study the art of war and to write Lord Raglan’s history. When this was brought down to the time of his friend’s death, Kinglake considered his work completed.

“ Our great strategist, Todleben—whose name will for ever be connected with the heroic defence of Sebastopol—visited Kinglake in London, and entertained him in the Crimea a few years after the conclusion of peace. The General was very fond of him personally. Could any one knowing Kinglake help being so ?

“ Nevertheless, Todleben never looked upon the *History of the Crimean War* as a specimen of scientific and authoritative work. He spoke once at my house to that effect.

“ ‘ But is it not most interesting ? ’ interrupted I rather impatiently. ‘ Can you not read it with breathless interest, like a delightful novel ? ’

“ ‘ Just so,’ replied Todleben, smiling at my impatience ; ‘ like a novel, not military history ! ’

“ There was not a particle of petty vanity about our Todleben, or he would not have minimised the historical value of a work which speaks of him in such glowing terms.

"A characteristic and quite authentic anecdote corroborates my view. I had it at first hand.

"A German travelling once from Berlin to St. Petersburg met a Russian, who seemed to be a man of great experience in military questions.

"Being a soldier himself, the German, delighted with his companion, became very talkative and frank. 'I admire the Russian army immensely,' said he. 'But there is one thing about you Russians, however, which I cannot tolerate.'

"'What is it?' inquired the other, evidently interested.

"'You have no hero-worship; you have no Carlyle to teach you that feeling. You only admire foreign heroes. Towards your own you remain perfectly indifferent. Let me give you an example. But tell me first what you think yourself of General Todleben?'

"'Well,' said the Russian, speaking without the slightest enthusiasm, 'he certainly did his duty not worse than anybody else. There are many in Russia just as good, if not better.'

"'There!' exclaimed the German triumphantly, 'was I not right? A man who everywhere would be considered a glory to his country, whose statue would be in every city, whose portrait in every military school, you speak of him as if he were nothing more than a simple mediocrity!'

"The Russian managed to change the subject. Upon many questions they fully agreed; so much so that further meetings were agreed upon. On reaching St. Petersburg, the German presented his card; the Russian had to do the same. It was only then that his name was disclosed. He was General Todleben himself!

“But to return to Kinglake. He and I often disagreed, or, perhaps, I should rather say, agreed to differ. I admired the absence of duelling in England—a practice where the question of honour is decided sometimes by mere chance, sometimes by mechanical skill in shooting or fencing. Besides, our two best poets, Poushkin and Lermontoff, lost their lives in that mad fashion. Even now the slightest cause may forfeit the most precious life in Russia, as in Germany and France.

“Kinglake, on the contrary, blamed the ‘Iron Duke’ for having suppressed duels, ‘which,’ he said, ‘kept up a better tone in society.’

“I heard from one of ‘Eothen’s’ friends that when he was comparatively young—about the time of the Crimean War—he sent a challenge, and went to Boulogne, expecting his adversary to follow. A week having passed without the adversary putting in an appearance, Kinglake returned disgusted to London. I never knew the details of that incident.

“Kinglake was also all for war. He used to say that the facing of death had an ennobling influence on humanity; that peace would emasculate the world. ‘Besides,’ he continued, ‘population, when too dense, is not at its best.’

“‘But in Russia,’ I rejoined, ‘we are not peopled sufficiently. It is a well-known fact that, if we have no proletariat, it is because there is more work than workers. This is, perhaps, an advantage Russia has over other European countries.’

“Sometimes vexed with my lack of demonstrative power, I brought great authorities to my aid.

“‘I wish you had come earlier yesterday,’ remarked I to him once; ‘you would have met John Bright. He was at first speaking in favour of Free

Trade, which, I dare say, for an island like England, was the best system to introduce, but he also talked of war. I told him that I was looking at the Pall Mall Crimea statue and could not help feeling that that statue was the only result gained by England from our terrible struggle. "Yes," said John Bright, "but the inscription should be altered; the *a* should be put before the word *crime*, and not at the end! I believe," said Bright, with his strikingly melodious voice, and with peculiar emphasis, "that half the people who discuss that terrible subject have not the slightest idea what they are talking about. It is the essence of all the sufferings, the horrors, the crimes of which man is capable."'

"Kinglake interrupted: 'Oh, Bright is nothing but a Quaker!'

"'I dislike your "but,"' interrupted I. 'The Quakers deserve trust and admiration; there is no hypocrisy, no sham about them. They are true to themselves and their doctrines.'

"Surely these views are absolutely demanded by Christian civilisation. But dear Kinglake liked to describe himself as a heathen, and this argument used to bring many of our discussions to an abrupt stop.

"In his own case the fighting spirit was certainly conspicuous during his last illness, which he bore with stoical courage. Kinglake was eighty-one when he died, on January 2, 1891, but his mind was powerful and bright to his last day.

"I called on him frequently during the trying time of his illness, and only when all was over did I fully realise the loss of my old and exceptionally kind friend."'¹

¹ Canon Tuckwell, describing these last days, says :—

"He fights the admonitions of coming weakness; goes to Sidmouth

Of the Kinglake Letters an admirable descriptive summary is given by Canon Tuckwell in the *Life* from which I have so frequently quoted and from which I take the liberty of quoting again :—

“ The correspondence ” (with Madame Novikoff), says the Canon, “ which began in 1874 continued without a break till his death in 1890. The intimacy added charm, interest, fragrance to his life, brought out in him all that was genial, playful, humorous.

“ Oftenest, the letters are serious in their admiring compliments ; they speak of her superb organisation of health and life and strength and joyousness, the delightful sunshine of her presence, her decision and strength of will, her great qualities and great opportunities,—‘ away from you the world seems a blank,’—he is glad that his great Eltchi has been made known to her ; the old statesman will be impressed, he feels sure, by her ‘ intense life ; graciousness and grace, intellect carefully masked, musical faculty in talk, with that heavenly power of coming to an end.’ He sends playful affectionate messages from other members of the *Gerontation*, as he calls it, the

with a sore throat, but takes his papers and his books. It is, he says, a deserted little seacoast place. ‘ Mrs. Grundy has a small house there, but she does not know me by sight. If Madame Novikoff were to come, the astonished little town, dazzled first by her, would find itself invaded by theologians, bishops, ambassadors of deceased emperors, and an ex-Prime Minister.’ But as time goes on he speaks more often of his suffering throat, of gout, increasing deafness, only half a voice : his last letter is written in July 1890, to condole with his friend upon her husband’s death. In October his nurse takes the pen ; Madame Novikoff comes back hurriedly from Scotland to find him in his last illness. ‘ It is very nice,’ he told his nurse, ‘ to see dear Madame Novikoff again, but I am going down hill fast and cannot hope to be well enough to see much of her.’ This is in November 1890 ; on New Year’s Eve came the inexorable ‘ Terminator of delights and Separator of friends.’ ”

group of aged admirers who formed her inner court ; echoing their laments over the universality of her patronage. ' Hayward can pardon your having an ambassador or two at your *feet*, but to find the way to your *heart* obstructed by a crowd of astronomers, Russ - expansionists, metaphysicians, theologians, translators, historians, poets ; '—this is more than he can endure. The crowd reduces him, as Ampère said to Madame Récamier, to the qualified blessing of being only *chez vous*, from the delight of being *avec vous*. He hails and notifies additions to the list of her admirers ; quotes enthusiastic praise of her from Stansfeld and Charles Villiers, warm appreciation from Morier, Sir Robert Peel, Violet Fane. He rallies her on her victims, on the devotion of that gay Lothario, Tyndall, whose approaching marriage will, he thinks, clip his wings for flirtation. So he pursues the list of devotees ; her son will tell her that Cæsar summarised his conquests in this country by saying, *Veni, Vidi, Vici* ; but to her it is given to say, *Veni, Videbar, Vici*.

" On two subjects, theology and politics, Madame Novikoff was, as we have seen, passionately in earnest. Himself at once an amateur casuist and a consistent *Nothingarian*, he followed her religious arguments much as Lord Steyne listened to the contests between Father Mole and the Reverend Mr. Trail. He expresses his surprise in all seriousness that the Pharisees, a cultured and thoughtful set of men, who alone among the Jews believed in a future state, should have been the very men to whom our Saviour was habitually antagonistic. He refers more lightly and frequently to ' those charming talks of ours about our Churches ' and theology, without getting drowned in it. Of existing

Churches he preferred the English, as 'the most harmless going'; disliked the Latin Church, especially when intriguing in the East, as persecuting and schismatic, and therefore as no Church at all. Roman Catholics, he said, have a special horror of being called 'schismatic,' and that is, of course, a good reason for so calling them. He would not permit the use of the word 'orthodox,' because, like a parson in the pulpit, it is always begging the question. In the 'Filioque' controversy, once dear to Liddon and to Gladstone, now, I suppose, obsolete for the English mind, but which relates to the chief dividing tenet of East from West, he showed an interest humorous rather than reverent; took pains to acquaint himself with the views held on it by Döllinger and the Old Catholics; noted with amusement the perplexity of London ladies as to the meaning of the word when quoted in the much-read *Quarterly* article, declaring their belief to be that it was a clergyman's baby born out of wedlock!

"Madame Novikoff's political influence, which he recognised to the full, he treated in the same mocking spirit. She is at Berlin, and is sure to see Bismarck; he hopes that though the great man may not eradicate her Slavophile heresies, he may manifest the weakness of embroiling nations on mere ethnological grounds. 'Are even nearer relationships so delightful? would you walk across the street for a third or fourth cousin? then why for a millionth cousin?'

"She is absent during the sudden dissolution of Parliament in 1874. 'London woke yesterday morning and found that your friend Gladstone had made a *coup-d'état*. He has dissolved Parliament at a moment when no human being expected it, and my impression is that he has made a good hit, and that the renovated

Parliament will give him a great majority.' The impression was wildly wrong; and he found a cause for the Conservative majority in Gladstone's tame foreign policy, and especially in the pusillanimity his Government showed when insulted by Gortschakoff. He always does justice to her influence with Gladstone;¹ his great majority at the polls in 1880 is *her* victory and *her* triumph; but his Turkophobia is no less her

¹ Writing on Madame Novikoff's influence on English politics, the Rev. Canon Tuckwell says in his *Life of Kinglake* :—

"God-daughter to the Tsar Nicholas, Madame Novikoff is a devoted Imperialist, nor less in sympathy, as were all her family, with Russian patriotism: after the death of her brother in Servia on July 6th, 1876, she became a still more ardent Slavophile. The three articles of Slavophilism are, she says, those of her country, Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationalism. Her political aspirations have been guided, and guided right, by her tact and goodness of heart. Her life's aim has been to bring about a cordial understanding between England and her native land; there is little doubt that her influence with leading Liberal politicians, and her vigorous allocutions in the Press, had much to do with the enthusiasm manifested by England for the liberation of the Danubian States. Readers of the Princess Lieven's letters to Earl Grey will recall the part played by that able ambassadress in keeping this country neutral through the crisis of 1828-9 (*vide antea*, footnote, p. 1-4); to her Madame Novikoff has been likened, and probably with truth, by the Turkish Press both English and Continental. She was accused in 1876 of playing on the religious side of Mr. Gladstone's character to secure his interest in the Danubians as members of the Greek Church, while with unecclesiastical people she was said to be equally skilful on the political side, converting at the same time Anglophobe Russia by her letters to the *Moscow Gazette*. Mr. Gladstone's leanings to Montenegro were attributed angrily in the English *Standard* to Madame Novikoff: 'A serious statesman should know better than to catch contagion from the petulant enthusiasm of a Russian Apostle.'

"From her natural endowments and her long familiarity with courts, she has acquired a capacity for combining, controlling, entertaining social 'circles' which recalls *les salons d'autrefois*, the drawing-rooms of an Anselot, a Le Brun, a Récamier. Residing in several European capitals, she surrounds herself in each with persons intellectually eminent; in England, where she has long spent her winters, Gladstone, Carlyle and Froude, Charles Villiers, Bernal Osborne, Sir Robert Morier, Lord Houghton, Lyall, and many more of the same high type, formed her court and owned her influence."

creation : ' England is stricken with incapacity because you have stirred up the seething cauldron that boils under Gladstone's skull, putting in diabolical charms and poisons of theology to overturn the structure of English polity ; ' she will be able, he thinks, to tell her Government that Gladstone is doing his best to break up the British Empire.

" So the letters go, interspersed with news, with criticisms of notable persons, with comments enlightening or cynical on passing political events : with personal matters only now and then ; as when he notes the loss of his two sisters ; dwells with unwonted feeling on the death of his eldest nephew by consumption ; condoles with her on her husband's illness ; gives counsel, wise or playful, as to the education of her son. ' I am glad to hear that he is good at Greek, Latin, and Mathematics, for that shows his cleverness ; glad also to hear that he is naughty, for that shows his force. I advise you to claim and exercise as much control as possible, because I am certain that a woman—especially so gifted a one as you—knows more, or rather feels more, about the right way of bringing up a boy than any mere man.' "

The two great public services which Kinglake was able to render to Madame Novikoff in the two critical moments in her career will be recorded in their proper place.

But I may quote here Madame Novikoff's reference to the second of these two services—his article in the *Quarterly Review* on her book *Russia and England* :—

" My book on *Russia and England*, from 1876 to 1880—thanks chiefly to Mr. Froude's preface and Mr. Gladstone's very kind review of it in the *Nineteenth Century*, as well as Emile de Laveleye's article

in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* and in many other publications—had created an unexpected sensation. The Jingo camp was full of bitter attacks upon me, which I accepted with gratitude as the only possible compliment from such a source. Some of these were simply absurd, and made me only laugh. But Kinglake was vexed, and determined to counteract the attack. In order to achieve that object he interrupted his usual work—the later volumes of his *Crimean War*—and actually wrote a paper on the Eastern Question in the *Quarterly Review*, the beginning of which was nothing but a glowing panegyric of my work. Nobody at that time, except the editor, knew the authorship of that unexpected demonstration of partiality and sympathy in the very heart of Toryism ; and, of course, had it been written by a man less known and valued in the literary world, nothing of this kind could ever have appeared in such a quarter. The second part, referring to the political situation, was added by some one else, with the object of toning down Kinglake's views, but I personally continued to have the benefit of his defence. That number of the *Quarterly* puzzled everybody, and created a stir. To Kinglake and myself it was the source of many amusing discussions. Some people ascribed it to Lord Salisbury, others to the Russian Chancellor, Prince Gortschakoff ! ”

Canon Tuckwell adds the following details in his *Life of Kinglake* :—

“ Learning that an assault upon it was contemplated in the *Quarterly*, Kinglake offered to supply the editor, Dr. Smith, with materials which might be used so as to neutralise a personal attack upon O.K. Smith entreated him to compose the

whole article himself. 'I could promise you,' he writes, 'that the authorship should be kept a profound secret;' that promise was strictly kept by the editor, the author, and Madame Novikoff. Except these three people, nobody knew that Kinglake had a hand in it; the editor would seem to have kept his secret even from the publishers. Kinglake wrote the first part, but he did not know the writer of this latter part. Not satisfied with this success in England, he begged her to acquaint her friends in Moscow what a majestic organ is the *Quarterly*, how weighty therefore its laudation of herself."

Canon Tuckwell continues: "Madame Novikoff recalls his bringing her soon afterwards an article on her, written, he said, in an adoring tone by Laveleye in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, and directing her to a paper in *Fraser*, by Miss Pauline Irby, a friend of the Slavs, and of Madame Novikoff. He quotes with delight Chenery's approbation of her *Life of Skobelev*; he spoke of you 'with a gleam of kindliness in his eyes which really and truly I had never observed before.' 'The *Times* quotes her as the "eloquent authoress of *Russia and England*";' 'fancy that from your enemy! you are getting even the *Times* into your net,' added he."

A later article on O. K. contains some praise, but more abuse. Hayward is angry with it; Kinglake thinks it more friendly than could have been expected "to you, a friend of mine, their old open enemy: the sugar-plums were meant for you, the sprinklings of soot for me."



MADAME OLGA NOVIKOFF (1875).

CHAPTER X.

TILL THE END OF 1875.

MADAME NOVIKOFF'S first visit to England was in the year 1868. It was not until the year 1873 that she began to take part in English political affairs. In that year, after paying a short visit to Brighton, she went to London, and took up her quarters at Claridge's, which in those days was an old-fashioned hotel, the usual headquarters of distinguished foreign visitors.

Madame Novikoff was welcomed at the Russian Embassy and invited to the social functions at Chesham Place. Baron Brunnow, who was a friend of her mother, Madame Kiréeff, was at that time nearing the close of his long and distinguished career as Russian Ambassador in London. He was Ambassador before the Crimean War broke out, and when peace was declared he returned to his old post, where he remained till his death in 1875. Owing to his seniority, his high character and general popularity, he held a unique position in the diplomatic corps at that time. Monsieur de Staal was the only Russian Ambassador at the Court of St. James's who could be compared with Baron Brunnow, either for the length of his period of service or for the personal esteem with which he was regarded in English society.

When the Duke of Wellington died, Queen Victoria expressed a wish that the funeral should be attended

by all the diplomatic corps. The French Ambassador, on receiving this intimation, was much upset. He hurried off to his colleague of Russia, and confided to him the difficulty in which he was placed. "The Queen," he said, "expects us to go to St. Paul's to the funeral of the Duke of Wellington. How can I go, considering the injury which the Duke inflicted upon my country? What can I do?" Baron Brunnow listened gravely to his colleague's exposition, and then replied: "As the Duke is dead," he said, "I think you can safely go to his funeral. If you were asked to attend his resurrection I would say, refuse the invitation." As the Duke was really dead, the place of the French Ambassador was not vacant.

It was in January 1873 that Baron Brunnow gave a party at the Russian Embassy to our present King Edward, then Prince of Wales, to which many members of both Houses of Parliament were invited. Madame Novikoff was also present, and in the course of the evening the Ambassador introduced her to Mr. Disraeli and to Mr. Gladstone, both of whom she met for the first time. She was standing between the leader of the Opposition and the English Prime Minister, and engaged in conversation with both.

It was a curious group. The Ambassador, full of years and of honours, who had so long and worthily represented his Government; the Russian lady, the future unofficial representative of the Russian Nation; Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Disraeli. All four chatted together for a time, little dreaming what the future had in store. Madame Novikoff asked Mr. Disraeli when Parliament would meet. Mr. Disraeli replied: "You had better ask Mr. Gladstone; he can tell you that better than I can." Turning to Mr. Gladstone, she asked him the same question, and

thus a conversation began which lasted for some time. Mr. Gladstone was a first-rate talker, he found Madame Novikoff a very sympathetic listener, and they soon discovered they had many interests in common.

When their conversation was over, Mr. Villiers came up to Madame Novikoff and said with a smile : " I bet anything you are talking theology together. Gladstone might perhaps live without bread, but he would certainly die if he were deprived of theology ! " " You are wrong," said Madame Novikoff ; " you have lost your bet." Theology had not been mentioned in their conversation. Nevertheless it was extremely interesting.

A few days later, after thinking over Mr. Villiers' remark, Madame Novikoff sent to Mr. Gladstone her translation of her brother's pamphlet on the Old Catholic Conference. Mr. Gladstone replied with the punctuality which always distinguished him, acknowledging the receipt of the pamphlet, and thus began the correspondence which lasted till his death in the year 1896. Altogether Madame Novikoff received from him about one hundred and fifty letters. The handwriting of his last was weak and shaky. His eyes were dimmed and his strength was failing ; but he wrote with as much mental vigour in his last days as he had done when their correspondence first began.

On February 23 Mr. Gladstone paid her his first visit. It was at Claridge's Hotel. When Mr. Gladstone was announced, Mr. Abraham Hayward, Mr. Kinglake, and Mr. Villiers were with her. Villiers at once rushed away when Mr. Gladstone came in. Hayward and Kinglake remained. That quartette may be regarded as the beginning of the political salon which afterwards became so famous.

Parliament assembled on February 6, for what was destined to be the last session of Mr. Gladstone's first Parliament. It was significant that the Queen's Speech at the opening of Parliament contained the following paragraph on the Eastern question.

"It has been for some years felt by the Governments of Russia and the United Kingdom respectively that it would be conducive to the tranquillity of Central Asia if the two Governments should arrive at an identity of view regarding the line which describes the northern frontier of the dominions of Afghanistan. Accordingly a correspondence has passed of which this is the main subject. Its tenor, no less than its object, will, I trust, be approved by the public opinion of both Nations."

In the previous month news had arrived that an expedition to Khiva had been decided upon at St. Petersburg, and there was the usual flutter of anxiety in the camp of the alarmists, who then regarded every advance made by Russia in Central Asia as a direct menace to our Empire in India. Like all Russians, Madame Novikoff resented this extreme touchiness on the part of the British Russophobic, and it was in discussing this subject that she was first drawn into the vortex of Anglo-Russian controversy. She maintained, then as now, that there was no antagonism between the interests of England and Russia in Asia, and thus began, twenty-five years ago, that propaganda in favour of an Anglo-Russian entente which she was destined to see consummated by the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1908. One letter from Lord Napier and Ettrick survives from this period, which may be quoted as the first crossing of the swords preliminary to the long fencing-match

which was kept up on both sides for many years. Madame Novikoff wrote to Lord Napier, sarcastically suggesting that if he wished to win kudos he had better seize "the present opportunity of denouncing Russia from his place in the House of Lords." He replied :—

" You seem to me to mistake the temper and ideas with which I approach the subject entirely ! I am not an Anti-Russian. I do not mean to say a word uncivil, unjust, disparaging to Russia. You tell me to abuse Russia in order to get popularity here. You don't understand our society or people. Another man might get popularity by so doing. I could not. The English have too much sense of 'convenience' and reason to approve that an old Ambassador and ex-governor should take part in common political agitation. Nor am I capable of saying one word for the sake of popularity. If I speak I shall speak with great moderation, showing the nature and extent and danger of Russian expansion to us, but making all the proper extenuations and allowances."

This was but a preliminary skirmish, prophetic of what was to come. On February 13, Mr. Gladstone introduced his Irish University Bill, which was received with unanimous enthusiasm on both sides of the House ; but the Roman Catholic hierarchy, upon whose support Mr. Gladstone had counted, turned against the Bill, and early in the morning of March 12 the Bill was defeated by a majority of three on the second reading. Mr. Gladstone resigned. Mr. Disraeli refused to take office, and on March 20 Mr. Gladstone resumed office, to carry on till the end of the session.

In the vicissitudes of political parties Madame

Novikoff at that time took a very casual interest. Most of her acquaintances up to that time had been indrawn from the ranks of the Whigs. Lord Clarendon, Mr. Villiers, Lord Dufferin, Mr. Bernal Osborne, Mr. A. Hayward, Lord Napier and Ettrick were all on the Liberal side of politics. Lord Stanhope was a Conservative, and so were many of her ecclesiastical friends. But it is doubtful whether, when the General Election of 1874 replaced Mr. Gladstone by Mr. Disraeli, Madame Novikoff was much disturbed. Neither she nor any one else had at that time the dimmest foreshadowing of the influence which the transfer of power at Westminster would have upon the course of events in Eastern Europe.

Madame Novikoff followed the usual routine. She returned to St. Petersburg early in spring, where her position as one of the patronesses of the prisons, to which she had been appointed by the Emperor, entailed upon her the duty of visiting the gaols of the capital. She used to spend hours with the prisoners, bringing them books and tea, and hearing what they had to say for themselves. It is significant of the kindly womanliness, which is one of her pleasantest characteristics, that she never omitted to take pen and paper in order to take down from dictation the naïve, pathetic little epistles which the unfortunate prisoners wished to send home to their parents and friends.

She was devoted to her brothers and to her own household, and went about as of old in the society of Moscow and St. Petersburg. Up to the year 1876 no one of her acquaintances, not even her most intimate friends, had any suspicion of the energy and capacity that lay hidden beneath the pleasant manners and lively wit of Madame Olga Novikoff. She was

intelligent, sympathetic, very good-natured, with a special talent for attracting and retaining the friendship of notable men and women, but there was little or nothing to indicate the possession of faculties destined to give her a unique place in the history of her country.

When ladies devote themselves to polemics, the aridity of controversy is sometimes brightened by compliments and cheered by courtesies for which we look in vain when men monopolise the arena. Among other acquaintances made during this Old Catholic era of her activity, a prominent place must be given to Albert Reville, a Protestant theologian of the advanced school. Born in France, in 1826, he settled in Rotterdam in 1851, as pastor of the Walloon Church, where he remained for twenty years. In 1880 he was appointed a professor of the history of religions in the College de France. He was a learned and voluminous author. His first work was a comparative history of philosophy and religion; his last, a book on the Chinese religion. The year after he left his church at Rotterdam in 1872 he received Madame Novikoff's pamphlet on immortality, and a long correspondence followed, in which the strenuous polemics of Orthodox and Protestant was tempered by epistles of courtly compliment, of which one of the first will suffice as an illustration. Madame Novikoff had sent him her portrait. He replied as follows :—

“ *October 8, 1873.*

“MADAM,—I wish to thank you most sincerely for the charming enclosure contained in your last letter. In compliance with your desire I send you in return a photograph of myself, though I cannot

help confessing that in the exchange it is myself that is the favoured one.

“Dare I tell you the impression your photograph has made upon me? I was always singularly bashful with ladies, especially when the only remarks I had to make to them were flattering remarks, and still more especially when those remarks were nothing but downright truth. Even in writing I am easily abashed. However, one can hardly receive a lady's portrait without expressing one's opinion. Come, let us make the essay, and allow me, in order to put myself at my ease, to relate to you a little episode which occurred once on my travels.

“Some years ago I was travelling in Switzerland, perched on the top of a stage-coach beside a talkative Englishman. The conversation turned upon the respective merits of the two languages, English and French. My companion was anxious to become acquainted with a few French phrases of gallantry, so that he might on occasion—he said—make use of them. I rather suspect he wanted to lay in a supply for a pretty Bernese girl who was sitting inside the coach! In short, he asked me how to render becomingly in French: ‘How good-looking you are!’ That depends—I said to him—upon the degree of familiarity, upon the shade of thought, upon the intention which prompts that exclamation. You may choose between: ‘*Que vous avez bonne mine!*’ or, if you are on a certain footing of intimacy: ‘*Comme on aime à vous regarder!*’ or else: ‘*Quelle charmante physionomie!*’ or yet again, and this would perhaps most accurately render the idea: ‘*Mademoiselle, ou Madame, vous êtes belle à ravir!*’

“My Englishman took it all down in his notebook. I was never able to learn whether my erudition

was ultimately of service to him. To revert to yourself? Madam, I can only say to you in English—but with all the meanings possible in French—How good-looking you are!

“And if now I add to myself (not to you, Madam!), that a young and beautiful woman, able to command all recreations, has tastes sufficiently serious, and a mind sufficiently strong, to apply herself to work the nature of which may be inferred from the biblical researches which have lately come under my notice—then indeed do I make deep obeisance, and most respectful salutation. . . . But I stay my tongue, I blush, and perceive that when I write it down upon this paper it is absolutely the same as if I should tell it you by word of mouth, whereat I am afraid.

“Yes, Madam, do as you have made me hope you will. May the next fine season see you on our Norman shores! If in the meantime I can in any way be of service to you, do not scruple to avail yourself of your bashful, humble servant, A. REVILLE.”

In those days Madame Novikoff's correspondents—especially if they were Frenchmen—addressed her airy and empty compliments which constitute the small change of social intercourse. Within three years the most experienced statesmen in Europe were writing to her as if she were one of themselves.

But in those early days, before the tragedy from which may be dated her rebirth, Madame Novikoff could hardly be induced even to take herself seriously.

She has always been fond of fun, and sometimes could not resist the temptation to create a mild sensation even in her most serious mood. That feature made her company in the earlier days so amusing and

pleasant that it was difficult to associate her with the grimmer realities of politics and war. Thus, during her early days at Claridge's Hotel, shortly after she had begun to write on politics,—when curious people were speculating about her actual position in England,—several old ladies called on her. They came with determination to find out who she was, and what she was doing. Madame Novikoff immediately guessed that something was weighing on the minds of her visitors, and that she was called upon to resist something like a premeditated attack. At last, somewhat hesitating, one of these respectable antiquities said: "Madame Novikoff, you live constantly now in England, is it not so?" "No, it is not so. I stay here only a few winter months," said Madame Novikoff, "after which I return to Russia, where my husband and my boy await me." "But then," continued her inquisitor, "is it very indiscreet to ask what your object is in coming here?" Madame Novikoff looked at her audience, felt somewhat amused, then, after some affected hesitation, she said mysteriously, "Well, I am wanted here by my illegitimate children!" Then she continued, after a few moments of general horror, "I call 'illegitimate children' my political articles. I have no actual right to meddle in politics, you know, but when an idea takes hold of me I must put it on paper and present it to the world! That's all." What the dear old ladies said when they shook the dust of Claridge's off their feet is not reported. It is to be feared that as none of them was blessed with a sense of humour, they felt certain the case of Madame Novikoff was even more scandalous than they had charitably ventured to imagine.

In those days Madame Novikoff was much given to singing, and, even when alone, to repeating aloud

scraps of verse which struck her fancy. One foggy November day in 1874, after ringing the bell for the waiter, she walked up and down her long room in Claridge's declaiming Tennyson's familiar lines :—

“Ring out old shapes of foul disease,
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold,
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace !

Ring in the valiant and the free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.”

She paused, and saw to her amazement that the waiter had entered the room unobserved. He looked at her for a moment, and then said, with his broken German accent, bewildered : “ I beg your pardon, Mum, I was listening all the time, but I can't make out your orders.”

There is but little record of the years between 1868 and 1873, so far as Madame Novikoff is concerned.

During these years Europe was busily engaged in making history. The French Empire vanished like a ghost at cock-crow, the German Emperor was proclaimed at Versailles, the Black Sea Treaty was torn up, Mr. Gladstone's Ministry had come into office, and was on the eve of a disastrous defeat. It would have been very interesting to have the shrewd, caustic comments of Villiers upon all these events, to have heard at least indirectly how these events appeared in the eyes of a Russian observer. But the Novikoff collection of letters contains no correspondence during these years. Madame Novikoff appears to have destroyed her letters and kept no diary. As a consequence this narrative must jump

the gap, and take up the story five years after Madame Novikoff's first arrival in England.

During this period her only son Alexander Novikoff was often ill, and she had to spend a winter with him and her husband at Palermo.

Among the treasure-trove of these almost forgotten years I came upon some verses sent to Madame Novikoff by Lord Stanhope, the historian. He undertook to send her autographs for her collection, and included among the autographs copies of verses of some interest. One was the oft-quoted epitaph on Robert Lowe, Lord Sherbrooke, "the author's name not known by the public," but Lord Stanhope told her he was the author.

"EPITAPH FOR A FUTURE TIME.

"(Now circulated at the clubs, the author's name not known.)

"Here lies the bones of Robert Lowe,
A fickle friend, a bitter foe,
But where he's gone to, now he's dead,
Must not be thought of, far less said.—
If to the realms of light and love,
Concord will cease in courts above;
But if he sought a lower level,
All must compassionate the devil!—

LORD STANHOPE."

The second was a sonnet written by Disraeli in his youth "On the Portrait of the Lady Mahon," in 1839.

"ON THE PORTRAIT OF THE LADY MAHON.

"Fair Lady! Thee the pencil of Vandyke
Might well have painted; thine the English air,
Graceful yet earnest, that his portraits bear,
In that far troubled time when sword and pike
Gleamed round the ancient halls and castles fair
That shrouded Albion's beauty; though, when need,
They too, though soft withal, could boldly dare
Defend the leaguered breach, or charging steed

Mount in their trampled parks. Far different scene

The bowers present before thee ; yet serene

Though now our days, if coming time impart

Our ancient troubles, well I ween thy life

Would not reproach thy lot, and what thou art—

A warrior's daughter and a statesman's wife !

B. DISRAELI."

The third was a very long Valentine addressed by Lord Macaulay to the Hon. Mary C. Stanhope, daughter of Lord and Lady Mahon, afterwards Lord and Lady Stanhope.

"VALENTINE

"To the Hon. Mary C. Stanhope (daughter of Lord and Lady Mahon, 1851).

"Hail, day of Music, day of Love,

On earth below, in air above.

In air the turtle fondly moans,

The linnet pipes in joyous tones ;

On earth the postman toils along,

Bent double by huge bales of song,

Where rich with many a gorgeous dye—

Blazes all Cupid's heraldry—

Myrtles and roses, doves and sparrows,

Love-knots and altars, lamps and arrows,

What nymph without wild hopes and fears

The double-knock this morning hears ?

Unnumbered lasses, young and fair,

From Bethnal Green to Belgrave Square,

With cheeks high flushed and hearts loud beating,

Await the tender annual greeting.

The loveliest lass of all is mine—

Good-morrow to my Valentine !

Good-morrow, gentle Child ! and then

Again good-morrow, and again,

Good-morrow following still good-morrow,

Without one cloud of strife and sorrow.

And when the god to whom we pay

In jest our homages to-day

Shall come to claim, no more in jest,
 His rightful empire o'er thy breast,
 Benignant may his aspect be,
 His yoke the truest liberty;
 And if a tear his power confess,
 Be it a tear of happiness,
 It shall be so. The Muse displays
 The future to her votary's gaze!
 Prophetic rage my spirit tells.
 I taste the cake—I hear the bells!
 From Conduit Street the close array
 Of chariots barricades the way,
 To where I see, with outstretched hand,
 Majestic, thy great kinsman stand,¹
 And half unbend his brow of pride
 As welcoming so fair a bride.
 Gay favours, thick as flakes of snow
 Brighten St. George's portico:
 Within I see the chancel's pale,
 The orange flowers, the Brussels veil,
 The page on which those fingers white,
 Still trembling from the awful rite,
 For the last time shall faintly trace
 The name of Stanhope's noble race;
 I see kind faces round thee pressing,
 I hear kind voices whisper blessing;
 And with these voices mingles mine—
 All good attend my Valentine!

“T. B. MACAULAY.

“St. Valentine's Day, 1851.”

The year 1875 brought to a close the preliminary and preparatory stage in Madame Novikoff's career. Her life up to her thirty-sixth year had not been distinguished by anything marking her out for political service. These earlier years had brought to her the experiences of the common life of humanity—love, marriage, motherhood, friendship, travel and bereavement—and she had quickened the sympathies of a

¹ The statue of Mr. Pitt in Hanover Square.

naturally receptive mind by wide intercourse with many of the leading men of her time. But few of them had divined that she had any talent for writing. Charles Lever, who was an old friend of hers, implored her to undertake the writing of Letters from England, on the lines of Montesquieu's famous *Lettres Persanes*, which at least indicates that he thought highly of her as yet undeveloped literary gift. When Kinglake introduced her to Henry Bulwer at Richmond, Bulwer angered Kinglake by talking to him of her intellect and saying nothing concerning her good looks. But neither Lever nor Bulwer divined the rôle in which their engaging and humorous Russian acquaintance was destined to make her mark in the history of their times.

She had not yet found her vocation. All her life had been an unconscious preparation for the as yet unknown task that lay just beyond the dim veil of the future. Not until that veil had been rent by the hand of Death did she hear the call that summoned her to the work of her life.

PART II.



NICHOLAS KIRIEFF.
In uniform of Garde-à-cheval.

PART II.

1876.

CHAPTER I.

NICHOLAS KIRÉEFF.

TO make these letters and reminiscences intelligible to the reader, it is necessary to indicate as briefly as possible the course of events which led to the raising of the Eastern Question in 1875. The Treaty of Paris at the close of the Crimean War in 1856 had laid the Eastern Question to sleep for twenty years. By that Treaty the six Great Powers of Europe entered into a solemn pact with each other and with the Sultan that they would abstain from separate intervention in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire, and that all questions which might arise should be dealt with collectively, by what is known as the "European Concert." The principle of collective action had been subjected to considerable strain, but it had been successfully invoked for the settlement of the troubles in the Lebanon in 1860 and the avoidance of war with Servia in 1867. The Sultan, after the Crimean War, had the run of the Bourses of Europe, and availed himself of the opportunity to incur a national debt of £230,000,000. Western Europe, preoccupied with a succession of wars—France and Austria, 1859; German-Danish War in 1864; Prussian-Austrian

War in 1866 ; and the Franco-German War in 1870-71—had little inclination to disturb the sleeping dog whose kennel commanded the Bosphorus. Russia was absorbed in domestic reforms and in Central Asian development. But in 1875 Europe was at peace, and the Sultan was drawing to the end of his financial tether. Impecuniosity at Stamboul means two things : increased severity in the collection of taxes, and a diminished ability to pay the soldiery. When the explosive force of discontent is increasing and the restraining force of the garrison is weakening, insurrections become the order of the day. The honour of raising the standard of revolt against the Ottoman tyranny belongs to the Slavs of the Herzegovina. It began, as is the wont in such cases, without premeditation. A bad harvest in 1874 was followed by a merciless exaction of taxation. The starving peasants resisted the tithe-farmers. The tax-gatherers appealed to the authorities for armed force, whereupon the peasants took to the hills, where, with the clandestine assistance of their Montenegrin kinsfolk, they successfully defied the efforts of the Turks to reduce them to obedience. It seemed but a trifling incident. The sum in dispute was a mere nothing, the region was remote and mountainous. But a very small spark will fire a powder magazine.

As soon as it was evident that the Turks were unable to trample out the rising in the Herzegovina, the word passed through the Slavonic populations of the Balkan Peninsula that the hour was about to strike for their emancipation from the Ottoman yoke. Insurgent bands began to appear in Bosnia. The more ardent spirits of the Bulgarians began to dream of a rising. Serbia and Montenegro, the two self-governing Slav states of the Balkan, thrilled with excitement born of

sympathy and nurtured by ambition. More serious than these fermentations in the Balkan was the awakening of the national and religious enthusiasm of the Russian people, which found expression in the formation of Pan-Slavonic committees with their headquarters in Moscow.

These symptoms were noted with profound uneasiness by the Governments most concerned. At the end of 1875, the Andrassy Note, drawn up by the Austrian Chancellor and approved by Prince Bismarck and Prince Gortschakoff, was submitted to the other Powers. This Note demanded religious liberty, with reforms in taxation and administration, which were to be carried out under the surveillance of a mixed Turko-Christian Commission. It contained merely good advice, without a hint of coercive measures in reserve. It was accepted by the other Powers. Lord Derby, then Foreign Minister to Mr. Disraeli's Government, extending to the Note his "general support." It was presented with the collective authority of Europe on January 31, and on February 13 the Sultan signed a decree conceding four out of the five points of the Note. The English, whose attention was absorbed by the purchase of the Suez Canal shares and the proposal to make the Queen Empress of India, paid little attention to the doings at Constantinople until they were rudely roused from their indifference on April 3 by the announcement that the April coupon of the Ottoman debt could not be paid. The Ottoman bondholders were furious. The storm-clouds gathered more darkly than ever over the Turkish Empire. The reforms promised in reply to the Andrassy Note were not carried out. On May 6 the French and German Consuls were murdered in a mosque at Salonica. Far more serious, however,

than this incident was the rising in some Bulgarian villages against the Turks. It began on May 1, and on May 28 it was officially reported as being "completely suppressed." While the nature of that suppression was still unknown, the Emperor Alexander II. and Prince Gortschakoff arrived at Berlin to confer with the Emperor William, Prince Bismarck, and Count Andrassy as to the next step to be taken for the settlement of the Eastern Question. The acceptance, on paper, of the Andrassy Note having resulted only in the extension of the insurrection to Bulgaria, the three Eastern Empires decided that something must be done to avert a general conflagration. The result of their deliberations was the Berlin Memorandum, which, after defining the irreducible minimum of reforms necessary for the pacification of the Balkan, alluded plainly to the ulterior measures which it might be necessary to employ if the Porte failed to put its house in order. Public opinion in England was somewhat jealous of the three Emperors' alliance—at Reichstadt they had bound themselves to act in concert on the Eastern Question. Lord Derby was horrified at the suggestion of possible intervention in the East. Mr. Disraeli was delighted to pose as a friend of the Turk. Consequently, on May 22 the Government announced that they were unable to concur in the Berlin Memorandum. Two days later, the British Fleet was ordered to Besika Bay. The British Government had not only broken up the European Concert, the only instrument by which the Turkish question could be settled without war, but had emphasised the significance of their act by ordering the Mediterranean Fleet to take up its position within striking distance of Constantinople. Two days after that order had been

given to the Admiral in command of the ironclads, Abdul Aziz was deposed (May 30) by his ministers, on his refusal to contribute from his private fortune to the war treasury, depleted by the cost of operations in the Balkan. Murad v. was proclaimed as his successor. On June 4 the deposed monarch was found with his throat cut in his palace prison. The fatal wound was inflicted with a pair of scissors; but who held the scissors is unknown, the official theory being suicide.

On June 23 the first news of the measures employed by the Turks in pacifying Bulgaria reached England in a dispatch from Mr. Edwin Pears of Constantinople which was published in the *Daily News*. From this time onwards till September, when Mr. Baring's official report confirmed the worst stories of bestial savagery and wholesale slaughter, the news that hell had been let loose in the rose gardens of Philippopolis continued to arrive, distracting the attention and disturbing the conscience of the West. Mr. Disraeli pooh-poohed the whole affair, sneered at the newspaper reports, and jested about the atrocities which were destined to paralyse his policy and dismember the Ottoman Empire.

The day after Mr. Disraeli had cracked his merry jest over the "more expeditious" mode of massacre employed by the Turks, a certain Joseph Chamberlain, formerly known as the Republican Mayor of Birmingham, was returned to the House of Commons as M.P. for the capital of the Midlands, an event not without its influence upon the future fortunes of Mr. Disraeli and his Turkish policy. The day after that again, June 29, Prince Milan of Servia and Prince Nikita of Montenegro declared war against the Turks.

The Servian proclamation declared that "since

the insurrection had broken out in Bosnia and Herzegovina the situation of Serbia had become intolerable. "Regardless of our attitude, the Porte has continued to send military forces to surround our country with an iron band. It has sent savage hordes of Bashi-Bazouks, Circassians, Arnauts, and Kurds to bring our country to ruin. To remain longer in moderation would be weakness."

The popular opinion in the west of Europe was that Serbia and Montenegro were pushed forward as the puppets of the Russian Government, which was supposed to be inspired by Count Ignatieff, its Ambassador at Constantinople. As a matter of fact, the Russian Government neither desired war nor made preparations for it. And General Ignatieff, so far from urging them to make war, strongly deprecated the raising of the Eastern Question, on the ground that it could only benefit Germany and injure Russia.¹

¹ "When I was in St. Petersburg in 1888 General Ignatieff told me that he was opposed to making any war in the East. War, as he once told the late Emperor, was a public misfortune which injured every one, and, in his opinion, the chief function of diplomacy was to prevent international questions reaching such a condition of entanglement as to necessitate their severance by the sword. He was especially opposed to the war that was on the point of breaking out between Russia and Turkey. From the first outbreak of the insurrection in the Herzegovina he had written to Prince Gortschakoff, pointing out that the movement seemed to him the opening of the game which Prince Bismarck was playing in the Balkan Peninsula. The chief object of that game was to thrust Austria forward in the East, so as to render impossible the achievement of the chief object of Russian diplomacy—the establishment of a *modus vivendi* between Petersburg and Vienna, which would render possible an amicable solution of the Eastern Question when the Sick Man died. Prince Bismarck's calculation seemed to him to be that as soon as Christian blood was made to flow in the East, all the good people—in other words, all the excitable Orthodox Russians—would insist upon rushing to the rescue of their co-religionists, without regard to the exigencies of Russian finance, the condition of the Russian army, or the difficulties of the international position. Bloodshed, in short, would liberate one of

The great issues of peace and war are seldom decided by the wire-pulling of Chancelleries. But Prince Bismarck was a shrewd calculator, and the result which he anticipated came about exactly as he had foreseen.

The first collision between the Turkish and Servian armies took place at Sienitzza, near Novi Bazar, when the Servians were defeated with a loss of fifteen hundred men on July 6. On the 18th of the same month the Turks won another victory, in which the Servians lost two thousand men. But one of the men who fell on that day in the fight at Zaitschar did more by his death to affect the course of history in Eastern Europe than was accomplished by all the policies of Chancellors, the dispatches of diplomatists, or the speeches of statesmen. For on that day Madame Novikoff's brother, Nicholas Kiréeff, the first of the Russian volunteers, fell at the head of his Servian brigade.

This narrative of the course of events in Europe brings us to the story of that momentous episode in the Balkan drama.

When Nicholas Kiréeff decided to go to Servia it is doubtful whether he realised that he was embarking upon so desperate a venture. He was sent to Belgrade by the Russian Slavonic Committee, in charge of an ambulance and medical stores. If he had any intention of taking part in the war, he kept it to himself. It is probable that he had not contemplated becoming a combatant, but that on his arrival in Servia he discovered that the Servians the great uncontrollable forces of Europe, and hurl it against the Turk in such fashion as to weaken Russia and give Austria an opportunity for seizing territory which would effectually bar the door to any hope of an Anglo-Russian *entente*. This suited Germany, but it did not suit Russia."—Stead's *Truth about Russia*, p. 281.

stood much more in need of capable officers to lead them in the field than of doctors or of drugs.

Nicholas Kiréeff had quitted the Guards at the end of 1875. He found himself in Belgrade a free man. The Turkish army was carrying devastation through the Servian villages. Without officers, the Servians were but as sheep led to the slaughter. Nicholas Kiréeff did not hesitate many days. Without a word to his family, he volunteered for service in the Servian army. Taking the name of Hadji Ghiray, he was at once placed in command of a brigade, and went to the front.

For some days the European newspapers contained references in their telegrams from the seat of war to a mysterious and unknown officer, who, under the name of Hadji Ghiray, was doing great things in infusing a martial spirit into the troops under his command. Madame Novikoff, who was then at Marienbad, was quite fascinated by the reports of the doings of this romantic and mysterious stranger, always the first in the front, and, like Skobeleff, clad in white. Her first care in the mornings was to peruse the tidings from the Balkans. One day in July she was thunderstruck by reading in all the papers the same laconic but terrible telegram: "Hadji Ghiray is killed. It is Nicholas Kiréeff."

She could not trust her eyes. She hoped against hope that the papers, being easily misled, were also misleading in that case. But later on, in the course of the same day, a telegram from her eldest brother, Alexander, confirmed the distressing fact, of which he was personally informed by the Emperor himself.

Then followed the telegram from Prince Milan officially announcing the death of Nicholas Kiréeff:—

"I consider it a sacred duty to express to you my deep sympathy on learning the death of your heroic and chivalrous brother Nicolas Alexéevitch, who fell on the field of battle in the cause of the Faith and Truth. I deeply deplore that loss, in sympathy with his family and his friends. Having made his acquaintance only quite lately, I nevertheless was strongly drawn towards him. May the Almighty grant him Eternal peace. We all pray for the soul of the fearless Russian warrior who sacrificed his life for the Serbs. That death will be an everlasting link with our Northern brethren. PRINCE OF SERBIA."

The General came full speed to Marienbad ; and brother and sister went straight to their mother, who lived at a small Italian village near Lucca, and knew nothing of the family's terrible bereavement.

In the following letter, written on August 9, 1876, from the Villa Galducci, Lucca, Alexander Kiréeff communicated the news of his brother Nicholas' death to the Rev. F. Meyrick :—

"You know perhaps by the newspapers that I have lost my brother Nicholas, who fell in a battle near Zaitschar. He fell like a Christian, like a gentleman, in defending his faith and his brethren. You see we Russians are rather behind the time, and sympathise, even in our selfish epoch, with Godfrey of Bouillon and the lion-hearted King of England ; but I know you can understand lofty feelings which push a man to abandon all—family, home, business—and to throw himself into a dark whirlwind for the sake of serving only an idea, a belief ! I pity those who cannot do it."

The following details of the death of Nicholas Kiréeff are taken from *Two Months with Tchernaeff in Servia*, a book written by Captain Philip H. B.

Salusbury, one of the few Englishmen who fought on the side of freedom in those days. Captain Salusbury says :—

“ Seventy or more miles to the north-east of Deligrad is situated, on the river Timok, the town of Zaitschar, or, as it is spelt in the Austrian ordnance maps, Zajęçar. It was in the Servian attack on this place on July 18 that the gallant Colonel Nicholas Kiréeff met with a glorious death. Nicholas Kiréeff was a man of noble birth, and in his youth had served as Page of Honour to the Empress of Russia. When the Servian war broke out, he was appointed by one of the Slavonic societies chief of an ambulance ; but his heart yearned for more active service than that to be obtained with the doctors, and he accepted the command of a brigade composed of five battalions of infantry and a small force of cavalry and artillery. These men he led into battle against the Turks on the day that was to prove so fatal to him and so unsuccessful to the Servian arms. But a short distance had been traversed by the brigade when Kiréeff received a slight wound from a ball in the left arm. He paid no attention to this, and directly afterwards received a second wound in the neck ; this also he disregarded, and continued to advance and encourage his men to do likewise, when a third bullet shattered his right hand, and compelled him to drop his sabre ; but ‘ Forward,’ was still his cry, until at length a fourth ball penetrated his lungs, and he fell from the saddle. With a terrible effort he cried in dying gasps, ‘ En avant, en avant ! ’ Two soldiers raised him from the ground, and, according to his wish, carried him at the head of the column. But no

chance of escaping from the terrible carnage with life was to be given him, for a fifth bullet struck the glorious hero in the chest, and, passing through it, put an end to the beatings of the noblest heart that ever throbbed. Their leader's death threw the soldiers into hopeless confusion; they paused a moment, then turned and fled. But, to the credit of the two militiamen who were carrying the lifeless clay of their commander, they did not relinquish their burden, but attempted to bear it away. This, however, the Turks were determined to prevent, and they poured a storm of bullets on those two poor men who were so bravely endeavouring to perform an act of mercy. Both fell, pierced by bullets, and I regret exceedingly that I know not the names of those brave Servians. When shall the glory of Kiréeff and his two faithful followers fade? They deserve to be placed high on the roll of honour, in company with heroes of such deathless fame as Nelson, who died for 'England, home, and duty'; Moore, who lies on the field of Corunna, 'like a warrior taking his rest, with his martial cloak around him'; Arnold of Winkelried, the Swiss patriot, whose death at the battle of Sempach, 1386, 'made way for liberty'; and Ney, 'the bravest of the brave.' The Turks seized Kiréeff's body, and sent it to Widdin, where they mutilated and exhibited it; and to the application of the fallen hero's friends for leave to convey the remains to Russia, Osman Pasha, to his eternal disgrace, gave a flat refusal. When the news of Colonel Kiréeff's heroic death was circulated in Russia, the greatest excitement ensued, and, to their everlasting honour, both officers and men in great numbers flocked to the standard which Tcherniaeff had raised."

Mr. Froude, in his preface to *Russia and England*, says that "by those who can still appreciate noble and generous motives, the Kiréeffs will be recognised as belonging to the exceptional race of mortals who form the forlorn hopes of mankind, who are perhaps too quixotic, but to whom history makes amends by consecrating their memories." He says: "The story of Nicholas Kiréeff, which resembles a legend of some mystic Roman patriot or mediæval Crusader, the reader will find told as no other English writer could tell it, by Mr. Kinglake."

The following is Mr. Kinglake's narrative, which appears in the Preface of the sixth edition of his *History of the Crimean War* :—

" 'Guarantee,' 'august master,' 'good faith,' 'His Majesty's well-known magnanimity,' 'the Pruth,' 'the Danube,' 'the Balkan,' 'Bulgaria, high road to Constantinople'—the air once more is so charged with the language of Tsarinas and Tsars, and the names of their neighbours' landmarks, that—judging only from the unstudied sounds—one might fancy the strange, fitful drama which I long ago traced in these pages to be now again acting before us.

"And indeed, though with sharp contrasts, there is many a point of real likeness between the story of 1853 and the one we now see going on. Amongst the foremost of the causes which help to bring about this recurrence, there must be reckoned that crusading spirit of the north which, though stirring the heart of the millions much more deeply than the mind of their rulers, is nevertheless very steadfast. The Russians are a warm-hearted, enthusiastic people with an element of poetry in them, which derives

perhaps from the memory of subjection undergone in old times and the days of the Tartar yoke ; for, if Shelley speaks truly—

“ ‘ Most wretched men
Are cradled into poetry by wrong,
They learn in sorrow what they teach in song.’

With but little in their own condition of life that can well provoke envy, the peasants love to believe that there are others more ill-fated than themselves, to whom they owe pity and help ; love to think that the conscript they see torn away from his village is going off in close custody—to be the liberator of syn-orthodox brethren oppressed by Mahometan tyrants ; and being curiously prone to ‘fraternity,’ they can be honestly, and beyond measure vehement, in favour of an idealised cause which demands their sympathy. That the voice of the nation when eagerly expressing these feelings is commonly genuine and spontaneous there seems no reason to doubt. Far from having been inspired by the rulers, an outburst of the fraternising enthusiasm which tends towards state quarrels and war is often unwelcome at first in the precincts of the Government offices ; but it brings, nevertheless, a new force, which Policy may afterwards guide and pervert to worldly uses.

“ This volume shows how a war—in the midst of what seemed trading times—owed its origin to a gentle, poetic impulsion ; to love—fond, worshipping love of the Holy Shrines in Palestine ; and now as it happens, sheer chance—for indeed I sought no such knowledge—makes me able to say that it is sentiment—romantic, wild sentiment—which has once more been throwing the spark. When Servia in the month of July invaded her Suzerain’s dominions,

the new leverage of Russian Democracy had already so acted upon Opinion that the Tsar, although not at that time under anything like hard compulsion, was still so far moved as to be induced to let some of his people go out and take part in the rising—a rising against the Government of a state with which he professed to be at peace ; but this armed emigration at first was upon a small scale, and the Servian cause stood in peril of suffering a not distant collapse, when the incident I am going to mention began to exert its strange sway over the course of events.

“Nicholai Kiréeff was a noble, and by nature a man of an enthusiastic disposition, accustomed to the idea of self-sacrifice. Upon the outbreak of Prince Milan’s insurrection, he went off to Servia with the design of acting simply under the banner of the Red Cross, and had already entered upon his humane task when he found himself called upon by General Tchernaiéff to accept the command of what we may call a brigade—a force of some five thousand infantry, consisting of volunteers and militiamen, supported, it seems, by five guns ; and before long he not only had to take his brigade into action, but to use it as the means of assailing an entrenched position at Rakovitz. Kiréeff very well understood that the irregular force entrusted to him was far from being one that could be commanded in the hour of battle by taking a look with a field-glass and uttering a few words to an aide-de-camp, so he determined to carry forward his men by the simple and primitive expedient of personally advancing in front of them. He was a man of great stature, with extraordinary beauty of features, and—whether owing to the midsummer heat, or from any wild, martyr-like, or dare-devil impulse—he chose, as

he had done from the first, to be clothed altogether in white. Whilst advancing in front of his troops against the Turkish battery he was struck—first by a shot passing through his left arm, then presently by another one, which struck him in the neck; and then again by yet another one, which shattered his right hand and forced him to drop his sword. But, despite all these wounds, he was still continuing his resolute advance when a fourth shot passed through his lungs, and brought him at length to the ground, yet did not prevent him from uttering—although with great effort—the cry of ‘Forward! Forward!’ A fifth shot, however, fired low, passed through the fallen chief’s heart and quenched his gallant spirit. The brigade he had commanded fell back, and his body—vainly asked for soon afterwards by General Tcherniaeff—remained in the hands of the Turks.

“These are the bare facts upon which a huge superstructure was speedily raised. It may be that the grandeur of the young officer’s form and stature, and the sight of the blood showing vividly on his white attire, added something extraneous and weird to the sentiment which might well be inspired by witnessing his personal heroism. But, be that as it may, the actual result was that accounts of the incident—accounts growing every day more and more marvellous—flew so swiftly from city to city, from village to village, that before seven days had passed the smouldering fire of Russian enthusiasm leapt up into a dangerous flame. Under countless green domes, big and small, priests chanting the ‘Requiem’ for a young hero’s soul, and setting forth the glory of dying in defence of ‘syn-orthodox’ brethren, drew warlike responses from men who, whilst still in cathedral or church, cried aloud that they too would

go where Kiréeff had gone ; and so many of them hastened to keep their word that before long a flood of volunteers from many parts of Russia was pouring fast into Belgrade. To sustain the once kindled enthusiasm apt means were taken. The simple photograph representing the young Kiréeff's noble features soon expanded to large-sized portraits ; and Fable then springing forward in the Path of Truth, but transcending it with the swiftness of our modern appliances, there was constituted, in a strangely short time, one of those stirring legends which used to be the growth of long years—a legend half warlike, half superstitious, which exalted its really tall hero to the dimensions of a giant, and showed him piling up hecatombs by a mighty slaughter of Turks.¹

“ The mine—the charged mine of enthusiasm upon which this kindling spark fell—was the same in many respects that we saw giving warlike impulsion to the Russia of 1853, but to the enthusiasm of a sensitive Church for the cause of its syn-orthodox brethren—to the passion of a northern and predatory State for conquest in sunny climes—to that kind of religious fervour which mainly yearned after masses under the dome of St. Sophia—to that longing for a guardian-angelship which, however fraternal ostensibly, might perhaps carry with it the priceless key of the Straits, there now was added the wrath—the just wrath at the thought of Bulgaria—which Russia

¹ The able correspondents of our English newspapers lately acting in Servia took care to mention the exploit and death of Kiréeff with more or less of detail, and the information they furnished is for the most part consistent with the scrutinised accounts on which I found the above narrative, but it was only, of course, from the interior of Russia that a knowledge of the effect there produced by the incident could be directly obtained. The corps in which the hero formerly served was that of the Cavalry of the Guards, but he had quitted the army before the beginning of this year.

shared with our people ; whilst, moreover, this time there blazed up the fierce hatred of race against race, incited by Panslavonic agitation, and withal the eager joyous desire of a newly usurping democracy to use the monarch's prerogative of determining between peace or war.

"It may be that by greater firmness the Tsar could have withstood the whole weight of this national impulsion, and that even with the firmness he had he perhaps might have resisted the pressure if Fortune had smiled on his efforts, but this was not destined to be. Having endeavoured to let the enthusiasm of his people waste itself by acquiescing in their desire to volunteer for Servia, he soon came to learn that the men he had thus suffered to join in insurrection against the Sultan were so strongly supported by the sympathy of their brethren at home that he not only could not disown them, but was brought into the curious predicament of having to watch over their safety, as though they were troops in his service.

"Thus the phantom of the young Kiréeff, with the blood on his snowy-white clothing, gave an impulse which was scarce less romantic, and proved even perhaps more powerful than the sentiment for the Holy Shrines, but the very words I have used to establish the parallel disclose one broad, palpable difference between the Russia of 1853 and the Russia we now have before us. Yet even whilst still in the act of observing the immense change thus wrought, one can discern, after all, a close likeness between the volitional forces which acted upon the Russia of 1853 and those which govern her now. These pages abundantly show that, although the strong will of Nicholas (if only he could definitely know it) was absolute law in

all Russia, his own mind was the theatre of a breathless strife, being rudely drawn to and fro by the conflicting desires which alternately had the mastery over him, and that yet, in every one of his varying—nay, opposite—moods, he was thoroughly Russian, being sometimes indeed a Russian statesman, sometimes a Russian fanatic, sometimes a Russian encroacher with a wild shallow gypsy-like cunning, but always, always Russian.

“I have striven to make it plain that the impulse which has been stirring the Russian people was for the most part a genuine, honest enthusiasm, but already we know that this zeal, though expressing itself at first in mere personal, volunteered enterprises, was glad, when defeated, to look back to St. Petersburg and invoke the aid of the State. In obedience to that appeal, weighty armies are now fast assembling on the frontiers of the Turkish dominions, and it would be rash to make sure that, however disinterested originally, a State making these huge exertions will long remain purely angelic. The young Kiréeff could die for a shadowy, perhaps half-formed idea, but in the camp of 200,000 men, and in the Cabinet which has brought them together, coarser objects, if deemed within reach, must needs be tempting the choice.”¹

The tribute which Mr. Kinglake paid to the memory of Nicholas Kiréeff at first was cumbered with many anti-Russian sentiments. The story of how these were removed was told by Kinglake to Hayward, which meant telling it to the whole world. The authentic version is as follows, which I take from Madame Novikoff's *Souvenirs* :—

¹ *The Invasion of the Crimea*, by A. W. Kinglake, sixth edition, vol. i. preface.



NICHOLAS KIRÉEFF.
First Russian Volunteer killed in Serbia. July $\frac{18}{6}$ 1876.

“One day Kinglake came to see me quite early, about ten o'clock a.m.—a very unusual time for his visits,—and said he had been thinking about my brother, and if I cared would be glad to mention him in the preface to his popular edition of the *Crimean War*. I thanked him, and gave him all the English, American, and French articles, as well as the official telegrams I had, referring to that great misfortune of my family. Days, weeks, months passed. The end of my sojourn in England was speedily approaching, and I thought Kinglake had given up the idea of the promised preface. As he was writing about a war belonging to another epoch, I quite understood the difficulty of mentioning events which had taken place twenty years later. I never referred to the subject again. On the eve of my departure for Russia, Kinglake came and said: ‘I have been long about it, but you know I am always slow. Here is the manuscript, however, and I shall send it off at once,’ as the publisher bitterly complains of my being so behind time with my promised work.’ I seized the preface and read it. The references to my brother were extremely kind, and actually reproduced all the details published by the correspondents—some of whom were on the spot at the time of his death. But what he said about Russia—about our Church, about our Emperor—seemed to me so unjust, so baseless, and so wrong that I felt beside myself with indignation.

“I sat before the fire—Kinglake looking at his MS. I got up. ‘What have you done?’ I exclaimed. ‘How can you for one minute suppose that I will allow my brother’s name to appear in a libel upon Russia? This is nothing but a libel,—a libel, I say; and—no matter what happens as a result of my action

—unless half of this awful preface is taken out at once I throw your MS. into the fire. How could *you* write such a thing? how could you throw away my friendship for ever in such a way?’

“Kinglake, dear kind Kinglake, listened, said nothing, but gave me a red pencil. ‘Take out what you like. Do not be angry. After all, you may be right.’ I took out almost three-quarters of his preface, and so, mutilated by my hand, it now adorns the popular editions of the *Crimean War*.”

The preface, even as it stands after Madame Novikoff’s red pencilling, justified a remark made by Mr. Lecky on reading it. “I do not think Kinglake’s feelings about Russia are those of unmixed admiration.” But to have recast the whole preface would have been too much. It was sufficient to remove anything which grated discordantly upon the enthusiasm of the patriots of Moscow.

The preface, however, as it stands, was a notable deliverance upon the subject of the war, which exercised no little influence upon the minds of men at a time when opinion was in a state of flux. It was Kinglake’s work, but the inspiration was Madame Novikoff’s.

Kinglake himself, writing on January 31, 1877, to St. Petersburg, says:—

“I have not yet received any copy of my second volume, but I send you a proof of the continued preface, from which you will see that the part which you had such a horror of is banished to yet ‘another city,’ and that there is nothing in this batch of preface that Russians would dislike. At least, I hope so. I wished particularly at this moment, when the



Photograph by Elliott & Fry.]

W. E. H. LECKY.

troubles, we may hope, are calming down, that there should be nothing otherwise than 'paternal' from my humble pen."

On receiving a copy of this preface, Mr. W. E. H. Lecky wrote, January 4, 1877:—

"Thank you for the preface, which shows clearly that Kinglake's hand has not lost its old cunning. I congratulate you most sincerely on it, for it will make your brother's name a 'household word' in England, and will long keep it alive in the memories of men."

"The tribute to your brother," wrote Mr. A. Hayward, "was amply merited, and is most gracefully paid."

Kinglake wrote from a full heart. Writing privately to Madame Novikoff when the news first arrived, he said:—

"July 24, 1876.

"I have just received your note, my dear friend, and though I well know how vain all words must be in the presence of your grief, I have yet a feeling that blank silence is even worse than condolence. So, even in the midst of your sorrow, I cannot help desiring, my dear friend, that you should find, on arriving at Milan, these poor barren words of sympathy from one to whom you have been so kind, from one who so truly appreciates you.

"Sad indeed is the task imposed upon you and your dear brother Alexander, the task of imparting to your mother these cruel tidings. Happen what may, believe, my dear friend, in the affectionate sympathy of your
A. W. K."

He wrote again in August:—

“ I have this moment received, my dear friend, your second letter, and my answer to your first letter you will receive, I suppose, at the same time as this. From your first letter I gathered that there was scarcely any room for hope ; and, supposing it inevitable, my dear friend, that this blow should fall upon you, it is surely better that he should die nobly in action than upon a bed of sickness. Indeed, for your sake, after receiving your first letter, I almost longed to hear that, if your dear brother had indeed died, he had died upon the field of battle. Remember—in the midst of your grief—remember how truly we may most of us envy him his fate, and I would even venture to hope that your mother, distracted as she must and will be by the dreadful tidings, will have moments of pride in the thought that her beloved son’s death was not a vulgar death by illness such as most of us have to await.

“ I trust you will not fail to receive the paper you wished to have. How I feel for you, condemned as you are to impart this cruel loss to your mother ! If it is not too distressing to you afterwards to have to take up your pen, do pray write to me from Milan, and—Believe me, my dear, dear friend, yours affectionately,

A. W. KINGLAKE.”

“ *August 24, 1876.*

“ It so happened, my dear friend, that I was in the very act of writing to you, and indeed had covered three sides of a sheet of notepaper, when your letter of the 23rd (yesterday) was put into my hand.

“ It is plain that the conduct and bearing of your dear brother in action must have been grand, noble, self-sacrificing, and you may well be proud of him.

I should think the explanation of the position chosen by your brother, at the head of the force, is that, consisting of irregular troops, it required to be not only commanded, but led, and that your brother bravely placed himself in front of the force in order to draw it on.

"I enclose a letter which Lord Russell has publicly addressed to Lord Granville. As you know, Lord Russell's age is too great to allow of his having *weight*, but he has always had an instinct for evoking popular feeling, and certainly, you won't say that his programme is wanting in breadth or boldness.

"You speak of what Russia owes to the Servians, but my impression was that the Servians owed more to Russia. The Servians, when they began this war *in spite of the Russian Government*, had absolute independence with no other drawback than that of having to pay an annual sum to the Porte, and certainly I fancied that that blessing they owed to Russian aid. —Believe me, your affectionate A. W. K."

Not less sympathetic was Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, who was at that time busily engaged in revising the proofs of his book on "Russia," in the preface of which he acknowledges "my gratitude to Madame Novikoff, née Kiréeff, for assisting me in my efforts to reach the best living source of information."

He wrote: "Knowing your love for your brothers, I cannot but deeply sympathise with you in the irreparable loss which you have sustained. I had already heard the sad news when I received your letter this morning. In Saturday's newspapers appeared the following paragraph among the telegraphic dispatches:—

"The Russian Nicholas Kiréeff has been killed

in battle. This officer, bearing some resemblance to the Russian Grand Duke Vladimir, caused a report to be current that the Russian Prince was in Servia.'

"I had little doubt that it was Nicholas to whom the paragraph referred, but as I did not know that he was in Servia I hoped that there might be some mistake. On Saturday evening, however, my first fears were confirmed. I went to Knebworth to spend a couple of days with Grant Duff, and met there M. Klaczko, the author of *Les Deux Chanceliers*. He assured me that there was no doubt on the subject. In the case of a bereavement such as this, time alone can heal the wound, still I think you ought to derive some consolation from the thought that he sacrificed himself from noble, generous motives, that he died in a noble cause. I need not tell you how deeply I feel *for* and *with* you, but words—especially written words—are miserable comforters.

"As you have borne other misfortunes heroically, I have no doubt you will bear this greatest one with becoming fortitude and resignation.

"I have very much to tell you about myself, but must not trouble you for the present with my affairs. For the present I can merely offer you my deepest and sincerest sympathy in your bereavement, and remain,—Ever yours,
D. M. WALLACE."

Captain Salusbury wrote to Madame Novikoff saying, "a braver man than your brother never drew sword." Dr. J. J. Overbeck, who had known Nicholas in St. Petersburg, described him in the *Orthodox Catholic Review* as a splendid pattern of a Christian soldier. "His heroic death was only the legitimate crowning of an heroic life—a life of self-sacrifice for the benefit of his suffering brethren. Nicholas

Kiréeff was an upright and zealous Orthodox, and he not only believed, but acted accordingly. If ever practical Christianity shone forth from the life of a man we find it here. Never the poor applied to him in vain. His last roubles he shared with two poor Bulgarians."

Writing to Madame Novikoff, Dr. Overbeck said :—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—As I do not read the English papers, it was quite by chance that I heard of the very sad loss you have sustained. I felt sick at heart when I heard of it, and called back to my memory that healthy manly figure and kind disposition I saw at St. Petersburg. His death was glorious, no doubt, but what are all metaphysical consolations when the stern fact of his being gone for ever reminds you every moment of the irreparable bereavement? If Jesus wept over His friend Lazarus, you have all reason to weep over your dear brother, and your tears will prove a source of sweet consolation to you. Accept, then, the deepest heartfelt condolence from all of us.

"Would you approve of my translating the statement of the *Russki Mir* on your brother? What astounding heroism! With our united love and sympathy,—Ever yours,
J. J. OVERBECK."

The Rev. Canon Meyrick, in writing to her on the subject, expressed the general feeling of the High Church clergy upon the war in the East. He wrote :—

"September 2, 1878.

"DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—I thank you so much for so kindly telling me about your brother. It is most deeply, deeply interesting to one. I feel as though I too had lost a brother—a brother in this

faith I have lost in him. I believe that the cause of Christian against Turk is the noblest in which any man could draw a sword, and he has died very nobly. 'He beheld the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter, and on the side of their oppressor there was power, but they had no defender'; and because they were weak he became their defender, and by his death perhaps he has done more for them than he could by his life. I honour these brave generous Russian volunteers, who have been flocking to Servia, and should be ashamed at being an Englishman did I not know what a spirit of burning indignation has now been awakened in them which no hateful diplomatic traditions will be able to smother. The little that I have been able to do in causing this spirit (about which you ask) is this. I wrote the (I think) first anti-Turk letter to the *Guardian*, proposing the establishment of a Christian Defence League, and addressed a Petition to Convocation which led to an expression of sympathy. I sent them to your brother, Alexander, at St. Petersburg. I enclose also a later letter to the *Guardian*. To-morrow I have a collection in my church for our fellow-Christians suffering in Bulgaria and Servia, and we are getting up a public meeting in Norwich. As you will see by the enclosed note, I have also written to one of the Daily Papers. One longs to do anything to open the eyes of honest warm-hearted Englishmen, and it will be done. I only tell you this because you ask. It is nothing to what Russians are doing. With kindest regards to your brother,—I am, yours most sincerely,
F. MEYRICK."

It was a great consolation to Madame Novikoff to continue her brother's work, to serve his ideals. But

she also achieved another object in combating in their central stronghold the British jingoes. She felt a kind of satisfaction in thus avenging the death which was their doing ! It was not an ignoble revenge.

On November 1, 1880, a monument was erected, a large white stone cross was placed over the place where Nicholas Kiréeff fell. It was about twenty-five feet from the Turkish trenches. At the end of May 1883, General Alexander Kiréeff, accompanied by the Metropolitan Anthimos and a correspondent of the *Russ*, made a pious pilgrimage to the place where his brother fell. Alexander Kiréeff assisted in digging the grave in which the supposed remains of his brother and his comrades, collected from the battlefield, were laid to rest, opposite the monastery of the Holy Trinity, situated five versts from the battlefield of Rakovitza. Over the grave, in the porch of the church, high up against the wall, a portrait of the deceased was suspended in a golden frame with the inscription by his brother, "Nicholas Kiréeff."

But when the Russian visitors were leaving the monastery they were asked to assist at another ceremony. The correspondent of the *Russ*, who was present, thus describes what followed :—

"General Alexander Kiréeff was asked for an interview by the Metropolitan Anthimos, and addressed as follows : ' Pray tarry a little; I have something to say to you. Here, not far from the monastery of Rakovitza, five versts off and close to the high road, lies a village ; it is a new one, having been but lately peopled,—*it has not yet been named*. The villagers have begged me to visit their village, and to ' baptize ' it in the name of the deceased Kiréeff. Let us go

out of our way a little in order to do this, which will not involve much loss of time. . . . The villagers will be highly gratified ! ’

“ ‘ The nameless village ’ was situated immediately under Mount Vršhka-Chouka on its southern side. Zaitschar is the point from whence, in 1876, the Timok army advanced to action, and from whence N. Kiréeff with his division entered Turkish territory. From its summit the field of Rakovitza can be plainly discerned, and the *enclosed space* can be plainly detected with the naked eye—the open space where Kiréeff fell.

“ The idea of calling the village Kiréevo was not one of recent date.

“ We stepped down from the carriage, and went up to a table which had been placed in a street in the centre of the village. Here the Metropolitan offered prayers, sprinkled the villagers with holy water, and then declaimed : ‘ Length of days to the village henceforth called by the name of Kiréevo.’

“ When the prayers were over his Holiness Anthimos turned to the villagers and made an address :—

“ ‘ I am glad for your sakes, my children, for now you are free. Where are the Tcherkassians and Turks from whom you suffered such violence and outrage ? ’ (His Holiness Anthimos lifted up his eyes as he spoke, and looked out on the broad expanse before him, formerly peopled by Tcherkassian marauders.) ‘ Of Tcherkassian and Tartar villages there is left no trace ! Turks, Pashas, and Zaptiehs will trouble you no more. . . . I rejoice for your sakes. But do not forget to whom you owe this gift of freedom. It is Russia that has made you free.’ (Here the villagers raised a shout, ‘ Long live Russia, long live our deliverer ! ’) ‘ And what

has Russia sacrificed to give you this freedom? So great is the debt you owe this country that Bulgaria could never pay so much as one-thousandth part of that debt which is owed to her for the freedom you enjoy . . .’ (Again a shout is raised by the crowd, ‘Long live Russia!’) ‘It is not of money I speak. . . . Think of the many mothers and fathers in that great country who are mourning the loss of sons; think of the many widows who are weeping for the loss of husbands; of houseless orphans who mourn for lost fathers, sisters—for lost brothers! And here on this day there is one amongst us’ (here his Holiness Anthimos turned to where Kiréeff was standing) ‘who is mourning a brother, who fell in this *your own country* for the freedom of its people. . . . How shall we console the unconsolable, who have lost their dear ones for our sakes, to win for us our freedom?

“‘By calling your village by the name of the fallen hero Kiréeff you have given a proof to his relatives, and to the whole of Russia, our deliverer, that we do not forget—that *we cannot forget* those whose blood flowed for our freedom. Never forget Russia’ (here his Holiness raised his hand to emphasise these words), ‘remember Russia, to whom you owe your deliverance . . . without Russia we were like fish without water. . . .’ (‘Long live glorious Russia, our deliverer!’ the crowd broke in.)

“Words would fail to express the sensation produced on the crowd by this address. I will not attempt to describe the naïve ‘ovations’ accorded by the villagers to their guest Kiréeff.

“In the brief history of the village called Kiréevo that day will constitute a great epoch; tradition will no doubt perpetuate its remembrance from

generation to generation so long as the village of Kiréevo shall stand.”¹

¹ The Servians also cherish gratefully the memory of Nicholas Kiréeff. When, as Madame Novikoff, in company with M. Myatovitch, former Minister of Servia, visited the Balkan Exhibition at Earl's Court in 1906, it was mentioned to the Servian exhibitors that she was sister of Nicholas Kiréeff, they overwhelmed her with expressions of their gratitude.



IVAN AKSAKOFF.
President of the Moscow Slavonic Society.

CHAPTER II.

THE FRUITS OF THE SACRIFICE.

THE death of Nicholas Kiréeff, and of the other Russian volunteers who followed his example, produced the same electric effect upon Russia that the Bulgarian atrocities produced on Great Britain. These two tragedies, one heroic, the other unspeakably revolting, remodelled the map of Eastern Europe. The statement made by Mr. Kinglake as to the influence of Nicholas Kiréeff's death in Russia is amply confirmed from other sources. The following extracts from M. Aksakoff's address to the Moscow Slavonic Committee (November 6, 1876) afford first-hand contemporary evidence on the point.

M. Aksakoff began by explaining that the Slavonic Committee at first was solely of a charitable nature. When, in September 1875, General Tcherniaieff proposed to take fifty non-commissioned officers to help the Montenegrins, they had no funds. Not until March 1876 could the Committee advance 6000 roubles to send Tcherniaieff to Servia. Soon after his arrival in Servia began the Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria, and donations of money and effects flowed in in torrents. No special efforts were required to awaken Russian sympathy and compassion. For the Russians there was no enemy more popular than the Turk.

“The Servian war began. With breathless anxiety Russia followed the uneven struggle of the little

Orthodox country—smaller than the province of Tamboff—with the vast army, gathered together from Asiatic hordes dispersed over three-quarters of the globe. But when the Servian army suffered the first defeat; when on the soil of the awakened popular feeling fell, so to speak, the first drop of Russian blood; when the first deed of love was completed; when the first pure victim was sacrificed for the faith, and on behalf of the brethren of Russia, in the person of one of her own sons, then the conscience of all Russia shuddered.

“As from the first, so afterwards, the Muscovite Slavonic Committee offered no invitations nor allurements to secure volunteers. One after another came retired officers, requesting advice and directions how to go to Servia and enter the ranks of the army under the command of Tcherniaieff. The news of the death of Kiréeff, the first Russian who fell in this war, at once stimulated hundreds to become volunteers,—an event which repeated itself when the news was received of other deaths among the Russian volunteers. Death did not frighten, but, as it were, attracted them. At the beginning of the movement the volunteers were men who had belonged to the army, and chiefly among the nobles. I remember the feeling of real emotion which I experienced when the first sergeant came, requesting me to send him to Servia—so new was to me the existence of such a feeling in the ranks of the people. This feeling soon grew in intensity when not only old soldiers, but even peasants, came to me with the same request. And how humbly did they persevere in their petition, as if begging alms. With tears they begged me, on their knees, to send them to the field of battle. Such petitions of the peasants were mostly granted,

and you should have seen their joy at the announcement of the decision ! However, those scenes became so frequent, and business increased to such an extent, that it was quite impossible to watch the expression of popular feeling, or to inquire into particulars from the volunteers as to their motives. ‘I have resolved to die for my faith.’ ‘My heart burns.’ ‘I want to help our brethren.’ ‘Our people are being killed.’ Such were the brief answers which were given with quiet sincerity. I repeat there was not, and could not be, any mercenary motive on the part of the volunteers. I, at least, conscientiously warned every one of the hard lot awaiting him, and, indeed, even at first sight, no particular advantage could appear. Each one received only fifty roubles (about five pounds), out of which thirty-five went to pay the fare through Roumania, and the rest was for food and other expenses. The movement assumed at last such dimensions that we had to establish a special section for the reception of the volunteers and the examination of their requests and depositions.”

Sir D. Mackenzie Wallace, in his popular and standard book on *Russia*, speaks as follows as to the influence of Nicholas Kiréeff’s death upon the national and religious sentiment of Russia :—

“The Servians began by advancing, but had soon to retreat. Then came the news that a Russian had fallen. Nicholas Kiréeff—formerly an officer of the Guards, and well known in the society of Moscow and St. Petersburg—had fallen mortally wounded whilst gallantly leading on his men at Zaitchar, and his body, it was said, had been brutally mutilated by the Turks. This naturally produced a profound im-

pression on those who had been personally acquainted with Kiréeff, but, strange to say, the impression it produced on the lower classes, who had never before heard of him, was much stronger. The incidents of his death were embellished by the popular imagination, and awoke anew a host of old memories and old passions that had long been lying dormant. Other Russians fell, and the enthusiasm increased. Meanwhile the Turks had committed their 'grand mistake.' When all eyes were fixed on the Morava and the Timok, a cry was heard from the background, and all who had any human feeling in them stood aghast at the awful spectacle presented by the Bulgarian villages in the peaceful valley of the Maritsa.

"But tales of a death-struggle with the Moslem—tales of massacres, slave-dealing, and ruthless destruction of villages among an Orthodox population by hordes of savage Mahometans—these have upon him a very different effect. The old spirit which won the steppe, inch by inch, from the nomadic hordes, is not yet quite extinct, and the stories of the few who returned to their homes from the slave-markets of the Crimea have not yet been quite forgotten. And as in old times the *muzhik* hastily picked up his hatchet and ran to the rescue when he heard the cry: 'The Tartars are upon us! Our people are being killed;' so the *muzhik* of our own day is ready to lend a hand when the cry comes from the Orthodox brethren beyond the Danube.

"The educated classes have not this personal traditional recollection, so to speak, of Tartar barbarities, this Orthodox hatred of the pillaging Bus-surmanyé, but they have a very large fund of humanitarian sentiment, which had, after the

'Bulgarian atrocities,' the same effect. Strange as it may seem to those who cling to the old traditional conception of the Russian noble, I must say that I know no body of men who are more sensitive to humanitarian conceptions than the Russian educated classes. Their humanitarianism does not perhaps stand very well the wear and tear of everyday life, and is apt after a time to evaporate to a certain extent, but while it lasts it is very strong, and can drive them to make considerable sacrifices. Then, in addition to this force, there were the ethno-sentimental considerations. These were, and are, no doubt, very undefined, but they were none the less powerful on that account. An idea for which men are to fight and die is none the worse for being a little vague."¹

Writing to me from St. Petersburg on June 13, 1878, two years after her brother's death, Madame Novikoff said :—

"I am grateful and delighted to see how vividly my brother is still remembered by our Press. In one of the St. Petersburg papers they give a description of an evening party where people met to spend the last few hours with a young volunteer who was on the point of starting for Servia. Everybody was full of hope and enthusiasm. My brother listened all the time, nodding sometimes approvingly. At last the young man exclaimed: 'Well, if we conquer.' . . . Nicholas eagerly corrected him: 'Say—when we have conquered.' . . . The author of the article adds: 'I'll never forget that noble, dear face while he said those prophetic words. He gave confidence to all who had any doubts or

¹ Wallace's *Russia*, vol. ii. p. 453.

mistrusts. He looked as if inspired by God Himself.' In a correspondence from Bulgaria I found some time ago a description of some Bulgarians who had seen Nicolas a few days before his magnificent death : ' The poor fellows could not speak of our dear Kiréeff without tears in their eyes and repeating : " Yes—he was kind to everybody who came near him. He was self-sacrificing to the last degree, and never thought of his own danger." ' How often do I meet people asking me to write about him. But it is beyond my power. Nicolas was to me my very soul. He was, like my brother Alexander, all that was noble and good. His death, as I told you before, was a kind of logical consequence of all his life. Talking about him with Alexander, I used to say many years ago : ' Do you know that our Nicolas has quite the nature of a hero.' But it was hard indeed to see so soon the end of such a life."

Madame Novikoff, writing in 1891, thus referred to the national enthusiasm for the Southern Slavs :—

" The years 1876 and 1877 formed a grand page of Russian history—years of real crusade in our prosaic materialistic nineteenth century. The crowds of Russians who rushed to meet almost certain death in heroic defence of their oppressed and unarmed Christian brethren in the East, the vast sums of money, offered with spontaneous and reckless generosity, astonished all those foreigners who witnessed the marvellous enthusiasm of that movement. The President of the Benevolent Slav Society in Moscow—our ever-lamented Ivan Aksakoff—without resorting to any melodramatic sensationalism, collected more than a million of roubles, and Red Cross

societies sprang into life with magnetic suddenness all over Russia. I vividly remember some striking incidents of those times. I belonged to the Moscow Red Cross Committee. Our duty was to collect necessities for the ambulance, money and material. People of all sorts and conditions came to us offering what they had at hand: women of the world their jewels, paupers their copper coins. Here is an incident which touched us all. An old peasant woman, looking extremely weak and covered with rags, wanted to speak to one of us. I went up to her; she seemed nervous and agitated, and was hurriedly undoing a small parcel, carefully tied up in several handkerchiefs. 'For the soul, for the soul,' murmured she in so doing. I fancied she was going to show me the parish certificate of pauperism, and I painfully felt her mistake. 'Do not undo your parcel,' I hastened to say. 'I quite believe your poverty. I am sure you deserve charity, but, my poor friend, we distribute no money here; we collect it ourselves for the sick and wounded in the war. We have nothing to spare.' 'I know, I know that,' retorted she impatiently. 'Here is all I have saved in my lifetime. You will find here about three hundred roubles, take it for the soul, for Christ's sake.' Somehow I still thought it was not right to deprive the poor woman of so large a sum, and I inquired: 'But have you no children?' 'Yes, yes; an only boy. He has gone: he has left us. He is now fighting for Christ's sake. Take this.' And off she went, not caring to lose her time in idle talk.

"It would be easy to write a folio full of such examples of genuine religious enthusiasm which enwrapped the whole country including all classes,

high and low. But strangely enough, with a few exceptions, the foreign press endeavoured to describe that movement as a 'sham, got up by the police,' a 'make-believe on a large scale.' The police have certainly the power to light up the lamps in the streets, but for lighting up human hearts another power of a different nature is required."

Nicholas Kiréeff's death and the Bulgarian atrocities were the chief factors in rousing Russia. The Bulgarian atrocities and Nicholas Kiréeff's death were the chief factors in rousing and maintaining the anti-Turkish enthusiasm in England. The influence of Nicholas Kiréeff's death was brought to bear through Madame Novikoff upon millions who never even knew of Kiréeff's existence. The masses followed their leaders, and there were few in the anti-Turkish headquarters who had not felt some of the glow of the inspiration kindled at the battlefield of Zaitschar.

Madame Novikoff was prostrated by the shock of the news of her brother's death. One idea dominated her mind. "If England had not encouraged the Turk there would have been no war and my brother would not have died."

It was as a matter of fact perfectly true. The action of the British Government in rejecting the Berlin Memorandum precipitated the conflict of which Nicholas Kiréeff was the first Russian victim. But Madame Novikoff did not argue it out in detail. It was the instinctive intuition of the woman penetrating instantly to the core of the subject. "If Mr. Gladstone had been in power then had my brother not died," she often repeated.

In the midst of the blackness and darkness this

idea shone like a star through the gloom. As soon as she was well enough to use her pen she wrote long passionate letters to all her English friends, upbraiding them as the cause of her brother's fate.

"But for England's support of the Turk I had not lost my brother," was the refrain of all her letters.

She wrote to Kinglake and to Villiers—her most constant correspondents. She wrote to Mr. Gladstone, Sir W. Harcourt, to Professor Tyndall, and to many others, repeating to each and all the passionate lament over her brother's death, and charging the responsibility for the bloodshed in the East to the pro-Turkish policy of England.

Mr. Kinglake's preface, quoted in the previous chapter, attests as much by its style as by its matter how potent was the spell which the sister's anguish, evoked by her brother's death, cast over the minds of her friends. Madame Novikoff, mourning for her brother, as one of the innumerable victims of the holocaust periodically offered up by the Slavs on the altar of British interests, personified her race. *Ex uno disce omnes*. This heartbroken woman, what was she but a type or sample of the hundreds of thousands of Russian women who, generation after generation, had seen their brothers, husbands, fathers, and sons sacrificed in order that the Turk might preserve unimpaired and unrestrained his right to rule by massacre his Christian brethren? Of course, every one knew that it had always been so, and always would be, so long as British interests buttressed the Sultan's throne. But it is one thing to read of, or to imagine, misery at a distance, it is another thing to witness it close at hand, and quite another to see a young and handsome woman whom

you have learned to admire and esteem prostrated by inconsolable grief. This then is what our Turkish policy means, has meant and will continue to mean, so long as the Ottoman reigns in Europe! In the passage already quoted it can be seen how it moved Kinglake, cynical man of the world and anti-Russian though he was. It is not difficult to conceive how much more potent was its influence upon more susceptible temperaments already predisposed to anti-Turkish sentiment. The noble figure of Nicholas Kiréeff, dying heroically in the cause of liberty, became, for millions, the symbol of the New Russia, with whom it was possible for the friends of freedom to enter into fraternal alliance. The old Russia with the Siberian mines in the background was completely obscured for a time by the much more attractive figure of young Muscovy shedding its heart's blood in the cause of its brethren in the Balkans.

If Madame Novikoff had not come to London, the effect of her brother's death might have been but transient, might even have come to be regarded as more or less mythical. But in the presence of his sister scepticism was impossible. Every one felt that heroic self-sacrifice was natural to the brother of such a woman, and as she always maintained that Nicholas was the true Russian type, she contributed not a little to the discovery by the British public of the nobler element in the Russian people,—a discovery that was one of the chief factors which paralysed the warlike ambitions of Lord Beaconsfield in 1876-78.

We remembered that Byron had died at Missolonghi in the cause of Greek independence, and we thought with a blush of Hobart and Baker as hirelings

of the Turk when the noblest sons of Russia were dying like heroes in the defence of invaded Servia. All through the critical and trying time that began with the Bulgarian atrocities in May 1876, and ended in July 1878 at the Congress of Berlin, the memory of the selfless heroism of the Russian volunteers in Servia was the one unfailing source from which the leaders of the Gladstonian agitation drew the stores of robust confidence, which enabled them to combat and defeat the Jingo assertion that the whole Bulgarian business was a put-up job, contrived by the Russian Government with the object of stealing a march upon Constantinople. As the memory of the Turkish massacres faded somewhat, the Russian volunteers supplied a fresh inspiration, and millions of Britons found themselves for the first time realising that it was Russia, and not England, to which Providence had allotted the palm in the East. Instead of the old continual pre-occupation of thwarting Russia, there sprang up a generous spirit of emulation of her good deeds in the cause of nationality and humanity. It was Madame Novikoff's privilege to have been able to interpret this new and ideal side of Russian life to the British democracy at this critical moment, and every one who was on the inside track of the popular agitation, whether friend or foe, recognised her as an influence immeasurably more useful to Russia, and more fatal to the Russophobic policy of Lord Beaconsfield, than the diplomatic action of the official Ambassador in Chesham Place.

Through her sisterly affection and patriotic enthusiasm it came to pass that the heroic shade of Nicholas Kiréeff was felt as guardian angel of the Slavonic cause in lands and among peoples remote from the scene of conflict; and the agitators and

crusaders of St. James' Hall and of the north fought with stouter heart and more pious faith, because they knew, through her, that such men as Nicholas had lived and died. And it in no way detracted from the cheering effect of that inspiration that it was an open secret that official Russia, as represented by the Ambassador Novikoff in Vienna, and Count Schuvaloff in London, regarded the Russian volunteers in Servia with undisguised dislike, and did anything but support their efforts. In fact it was almost a struggle between two Embassies and one woman! Thus—unsupported, abandoned entirely by any outside help—she had to be guided only by her firm conviction and moral courage—good allies, no doubt—but only when they are very strong.

In writing to Sir W. Harcourt she added some words of thanks for his speech on the Eastern Question just before the House rose. He replied as follows :—

“ August 27, 1876.

“ DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—Your letter only reached me yesterday in the minute wild, in Scotland, whither I have come for my holiday after the Session. It is a great pleasure to me that a person so well acquainted with European affairs should approve the harangue, which I thought it necessary to express plainly before Parliament was prorogued. You may rest assured that English opinion has very much altered on the Eastern question, and that the Bulgarian transaction has aroused a feeling of indignation which no Government can disregard. I hope the fruits of it will soon be felt by a termination of these scandalous scenes, and by measures which shall place it out of the hands of the Turks to repeat them. I most sincerely sympathise with you in the personal loss

which you have sustained and which brings these things so bitterly home to your heart.—Yours very sincerely,
W. V. HARCOURT."

Lord Napier and Ettrick wrote her two letters in a more pro-Turkish vein somewhat later in the year :—

Monday.—"I will come to wait upon you. I have desired to write to you ever since I heard you had lost your brother in the Servian war, to express my deep sympathy for your family, which I believe identifies itself with the Christian Cause. I do not, of course, share these sentiments as an Englishman and a Diplomatist, but I understand them and respect them in a Russian and a soldier."

Tuesday.—"The account of your poor brother's death is very touching, and its effect on the sympathies of the Russian people is very honourable to your name. He will have a place, and justly, among the military martyrs of his nation. I can transport myself into your sentiments, though when I relapse into myself I must move and contend in the circle of English national interests, which I firmly believe to be contained in the policy of Palmerston, Aberdeen, Disraeli, not in the aspirations of Mr. Gladstone, however glowing and generous.

"I am living here, however, in a Russian and Gladstonian atmosphere! and lead the life of conflict, as far as cough and conflict can go together."

Colonel Knox, wearying of his "dull, monotonous life of court work and bronchitis," wrote, January 11, from the Marlborough Club :—

"MY DEAR KINGLAKE,—I have to thank you for your vivid description of Nicolas Kiréeff—which I

have little doubt would act upon the Russian imagination even more powerfully than it has acted upon mine. I should have quite expected that such a tale as this would, at such a time, be whispered in the huts of peasants amidst great stretches of snow-covered steppes, and attune their minds to warfare.

“The *bonâ fide* enthusiasm of the Russian peasants counts no doubt for a good deal in the forces at work just now, but I can’t help thinking in the long-run that the ambition of the few will control the impulse of the multitudes, and that this dispute will end in quite an unromantic way.”

It did not end as Colonel Knox feared. It ended in the liberation of Bulgaria, and the complete emancipation of Servia and Roumania. It even liberated Macedonia. But that unfortunate province was thrust back under the Turkish tyranny, not from any failure of Russian enthusiasm, but in order that Lord Beaconsfield might bring back Peace with Honour from Berlin.

All of those to whom Madame Novikoff had written replied in the kindest terms, with one exception, and he was the most important of all. Mr. Gladstone was silent. From a man of his uniform courtesy, his ready sympathy, and the keen interest which he had taken in the Old Catholic controversy, she could not understand this unwonted silence. Mr. Gladstone, however, had no intention of disappointing her. He had realised in a moment how banal and empty would be mere terms of personal commiseration. Her letter had struck a note to which the only adequate response was action, not sympathy. It is, of course, impossible to say to what extent Madame Novikoff’s letter inspired his pamphlet on the *Bulgarian Horrors*.

It is possible that that pamphlet might have been written even if Nicholas Kiréeff had never sacrificed his life in the cause of Slavonic freedom, or if Madame Novikoff had never made her passionate appeal and impeachment; but there is little reason for doubt that the arrival of Madame Novikoff's letter at a time when Mr. Gladstone was feeling, like the rest of his countrymen, the full force of the spasm of horror created by MacGahan's letters, contributed much to the intense fervour and passion with which Mr. Gladstone arraigned the Turkish policy of Lord Beaconsfield. In writing his pamphlet he was not merely discharging a great duty, a duty he owed to outraged humanity, he was also satisfying his chivalrous nature by supplying the best of all balms to the broken heart of Nicholas Kiréeff's sister. At last the pamphlet was written, and in September a copy of it reached Madame Novikoff from Hawarden; it was accompanied by the following letter from Mrs. Gladstone :—

"September 8, 1876.

"DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—My husband, overwhelmed at this moment with business, wishes me to write and express to you our sincere sympathy with you in your great loss; indeed we know what it is to lose a precious brother, and we also know as you do how to rejoice in a beautiful unselfish life being crowned with joy eternal. You will ere this have read the answer to your question as to Bulgaria in my husband's pamphlet in the newspapers. England is at length roused from her lethargy; indeed it is terrible what has been going on. Once more assuring you of our heartfelt sorrow in your sorrow, believe me, yours very sincerely,

"CATHERINE GLADSTONE."

It seems almost incredible nowadays, but in 1876 many otherwise intelligent men believed that the Slavonic Society was one of those secret organisations which dominated the imagination of Mr. Disraeli. Some even confounded the Pan-Slavists with the Nihilists. Writing on that subject Sir Donald M. Wallace found it necessary to explain that "anything less secret or less revolutionary—so far at least as home politics are concerned—than the Slavonic Committee of Moscow it would be difficult to imagine. There is a revolutionary element in Russia, but it has no connection and no sympathy with the Slavonic Committee. The idea that men who indite or chant hymns like 'There is neither God nor Tsar' can have anything in common with the Orthodox Loyal Slavonic Committee is exquisitely ludicrous."¹

It was to combat this delusion that at the close of the year 1876 Madame Novikoff translated into English and published in England the address of M. Aksakoff to the Slavonic Committee at Moscow on the subject of the war in the East.² Of all the innumerable pamphlets which were issued from the press during that time of crisis, the first place belongs to Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet on the *Bulgarian*

¹ Wallace's *Russia*, vol. ii. p. 451.

² Sir Donald M. Wallace thus refers to this publication in a footnote:

"The proceedings of the Committee, and the popular movement which it in some measure directed, were accurately described in a speech delivered by Mr. Ivan Aksakoff, at the meeting of the Moscow Section on November 6 (October 24, *old style*). This speech, translated into English and printed in a condensed form by a Russian lady, has already received some attention in the English press. Having compared the translation with the original, I may state that a number of tiresome details and some natural expressions of patriotic sentiment have been suppressed, but no important facts have been omitted. As to the authenticity of the testimony, I may add that I have long known Mr. Aksakoff, and have never in any country met a more honest and truthful man" (vol. ii. p. 452).

Horrors, and I am disposed to accord the second place to this little brochure of Madame Novikoff. She let facts talk and accompanied them with no comment of her own. Her pamphlet was merely a report of the glowing and eloquent address by M. Aksakoff to the Slavonic Committee, but it gave the British public just that which it needed at that juncture, an authentic utterance of unmistakable authenticity fresh from the Russian heart, free from all accusation of having been doctored for foreign consumption. This was the genuine thing at last. The sympathisers with the struggle for freedom in the Balkan read it with enthusiastic delight, for when they read it they felt the solidarity of sentiment uniting the East and the West. M. Aksakoff, though he did not speak exactly with the accents of Mr. Gladstone, spoke the same sentiments even more fervently, and the perusal of his speech did more than anything else to strengthen and confirm the faith of the Liberals that they were pursuing a sound policy in repudiating the Turkish Alliance, and centring their hopes on a cordial Alliance with the Russian people. At the end of the year Madame Novikoff sent this pamphlet of not less than a dozen pages to Mr. Gladstone. It came to him as a welcome New Year's gift.

CHAPTER III.

THE ATROCITY AGITATION, 1876.

THE outburst of popular feeling which followed the publication of Mr. MacGahan's terrible description of the atrocities committed by the Turk in Bulgaria was memorable in many ways. It was the first time the British Democracy intervened decisively by the cumbrous but effective machinery of the resolutions of public meetings and of representative bodies to veto what it believed to be the policy of the Government of the day. Often in times past public meetings had served as safety valves for the excited feelings of the British people; but excepting when they were in open or secret accord with the wishes of the Government of the day, such meetings were seldom numerous or representative enough to be described as an expression of the national sentiment, and were never powerful enough to overrule the will of a Prime Minister who commanded the confidence of his Sovereign and the support of docile majorities in both Houses of Parliament. In those comparatively rare cases in which numerous public meetings had been held to discuss questions of foreign affairs the object of the popular agitation was never to reverse the traditional policy of Britain but to goad a sluggish or timorous Administration into a more vigorous and consistent assertion of the established principles on which British policy had been conducted.

The Bulgarian Atrocity agitation was the first agitation in the long annals of England in which the Democracy sprang to its feet by an instantaneous impulse without waiting for the guidance of its leaders in order to compel a reluctant and hostile Administration to repudiate the traditional policy of the Empire, and to treat old friends as foes and old foes as friends,—in order that a new foreign policy might be forced upon the old Foreign Office and a new departure taken in international affairs. If ever there was a case in which the old adage held true, *Vox populi, vox Dei*, this was the time. For the impulsive instinct of the British Democracy saw more clearly than the statesmen of Downing Street where lay alike the clear duty and the true interests of Britain.

For a long time the truth of this observation would have been hotly disputed by a large minority of the public. But all controversy ceased when Lord Salisbury, speaking with the wisdom that comes after the event, with the authority of the Prime Minister of the Crown and leader of the Conservative party, declared that in opposing the popular mandate of the anti-Turkish agitation "we had backed the wrong horse."

The verdict of history has finally justified the much-abused Atrocity-mongers who in the summer of 1876 seized the opportunity afforded by the thrill of horror which convulsed Christendom on the publication of Mr. MacGahan's description of the massacres at Batak to demand the abandonment of the traditional policy of the Turkish Alliance and the adoption of a new policy based upon a cordial co-operation and *entente cordiale* with Russia. It was indeed a crucial moment. As General Kiréeff remarked to Lord Augustus Loftus, who duly reported

the conversation in his dispatch from Livadia, the decision then taken might firmly unite or permanently estrange the two empires. "He said he hoped England would act in co-operation with Russia. There was every motive, political or otherwise, to engage her to do so for her own interests, and for those of Europe. England would then reap with Russia the gratitude of the Christian Eastern races, and augment her influence with them. It was an opportunity which might not easily occur again, and if once lost, would not be regained. Moreover, he expressed a great anxiety that the present occasion should be profited of to establish a cordial understanding between the British and Russian nations. It would be the means of dispelling that mist of distrust which has so long disturbed the friendly feelings between the two countries, for their mutual disadvantage. He feared that if England should now continue an antagonistic policy to Russia there would arise in this country an Anglophobia far surpassing what had hitherto been known in England under the name of Russophobia."

How was it that the masses saw this clearly while the classes did not? How is it that it is easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven?

Mr. MacGahan's vivid word-picture of the hecatomb of skulls, of the outraged and massacred women, of the butchered babes at Batak, was flung with a glare of journalistic limelight before the eyes of a shuddering nation. Parliament was not sitting. The natural leaders of the nation were scattered far and wide, o'er moor and mountain. But here and there all over the country, but chiefly in the earnest North, were to be found men who had long been testifying

against the iniquity of the Turkish Alliance and the duty of endeavouring to make friends with Russia. Cobden had preached this doctrine from before the time of the Crimean War. John Bright had always been anti-Turk and pro-Russian. But the party leaders, from Mr. Gladstone downwards, were all more or less compromised by the Crimean War. Mr. Freeman was conspicuous among the men of letters who were zealous even to slaying against the Ottoman horde. The disciples of these men were to be found all over Great Britain, and when Mr. MacGahan's letter appeared they saw that their hour had come. These Stalwarts, no longer mere voices crying in the wilderness, were ready instantly to give articulate expression and practical objective to what would otherwise have been the blind, inarticulate horror of the nation.

A political parable, called *The Eastern Ogre*, avowedly suggested by the popular story, *The Fight in Dame Europa's School*, described without exaggeration the effect produced upon the British public by the news from Bulgaria.

“A wild, piercing shriek, terrible in its intensity, rang through the summer air! Another, and then another followed. Then all was still; and nothing could be heard on the estate of St. George but the sighing of wind through the trees, and the rippling of the river in its stony bed. The terrible scream startled all the villagers. Every one went about asking his neighbour what it meant. None of the gossips could tell. It evidently came on the East wind; but more than that no one knew. It was not a common cry. It was a blending of multitudinous cries and groans and shrieks, into one long frightful scream, that rang on the ear like the wail of a damned soul. The

memory of it made strong men shudder and brave men weep. But no one could say whence it came or how it was caused. At last one of the most veracious gossips announced in an awestruck voice that she had learned the meaning of the mysterious scream. It was a cry of death! . . . The Squire Turko had disappeared; the Eastern Ogre had reappeared, and was torturing, murdering, outraging his villagers, as horribly as in the worst days of old! And by the aid of a marvellous camera obscura there was displayed before the eyes of the tenants of St. George a faithful picture of the scene witnessed in one fertile parish on Mr. Turko's estate. Those who saw that picture were transfixed with horror. No questions were asked now as to the origin of that thrilling scream that had pierced every ear with its shrill accents of agonised despair; the scene explained the sound. The mystery was solved.

"Over a bright and smiling landscape there seemed to have swept a blast from Hell. Everywhere there was desolation, devastation, and death. The lurid flames of burning villages shed a ghastly glare upon the heaps of dead. Little children, fair maidens, and infirm old men were being hewn limb from limb. Hundreds were being burned to death. Children were being snatched from the arms of their parents, to be sold into an infamous slavery. Outraged maidens were mercifully massacred, or mercilessly reserved for further outrage. Wild dogs were batten- ing upon the bones of the dead. Here a mother wept over the skull of her child; there, in frenzied despair, a widow wandered wildly over the fire-blackened ruins of what had been once a home. And in the midst of the awful scene was the perpetrator of all these horrors, laughing aloud with fiendish

mirth, as he warmed his naked limbs in the blaze of burning homesteads, and wiped his bloody fingers on the tresses of murdered maidens. It was the Eastern Ogre !

“Men gazed upon this scene as they would gaze into Tophet. An awestruck silence ensued, broken only by the heaving of a great sob. Then there was a burst of passionate weeping, and then over all the estate was heard the muttering of a mighty curse.

“Said one labourer that night to his mate : ‘ So Turko is a devil after all ? ’

“ ‘ Hush ! ’ was the reply ; ‘ that is a libel on Hell ! ’ ”

At first there was a feeble disposition to question the authority of the *Daily News*’ correspondent’s story. But Mr. Walter Baring, who was sent by the British Ambassadors to investigate the matter on the spot, confirmed and more than confirmed the statements of Mr. MacGahan. After describing the church in which a thousand Christians had been burned alive, the streets where at every step lay human remains rotting and sweltering in the summer sun, and where he counted sixty skulls in one little hollow, nearly all of which had been severed from the bodies by axes and yataghans, Mr. Baring declared :—

“ To Achmet Aga and his men belongs the distinction of having committed perhaps the most heinous crime that has stained the history of the present century—Nana Sahib alone, I should say, having rivalled their deeds. For this exploit Achmet Aga received the Order of the Medjidie.”

And these men were our allies ! There was no escaping from that fact. We had been bottle-holders of the Bashi-Bazouk. Even while Achmet

Aga was burning, violating, and slaying, the British Fleet had been dispatched to Besika Bay as a significant hint to all the world that England would permit no interference with the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire.

The integrity of Sodom, the independence of Hell, in the name of God and Humanity, let us end that alliance once for all ! It was one of those leaps of heart whereby a nation rises in a sublime moment to the heights which tower above the mists of prejudice and the confusing barriers of conflicting interests. Come weal, come woe, the people would not, dare not, remain any longer hand clasped in hand with Achmet Aga and his master. It was a great moral outburst, rendered all the more momentous because of the cynicism with which Lord Beaconsfield had exalted British interests above all other considerations.¹

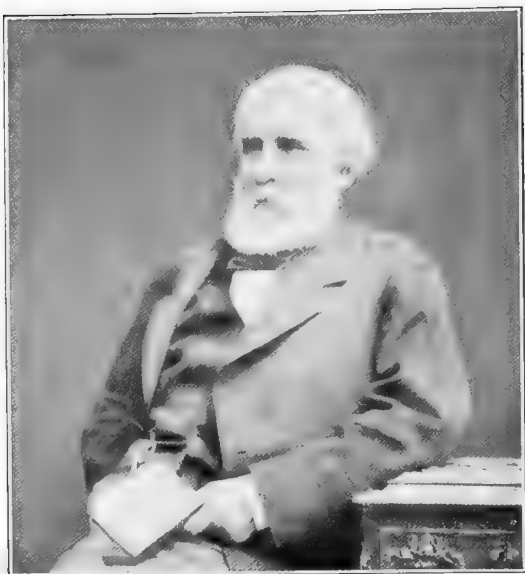
¹ The feeling excited in Russia by the support given by Lord Beaconsfield to the Turkish Government may be inferred from the following verses, written by Tourgueneff, the famous novelist, who was about the last man to be swept off his feet by popular emotion. I do not know who is responsible for the translation of these verses. They were written three months before Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet appeared.

THE CROQUET.

(Unedited.)

"The Queen is at Windsor ; Her Majesty's court,
Enjoying the afternoon leisure,
Are playing at Croquet, the favourite sport,
And full of excitement and pleasure.
The Sovereign herself looks uncommonly gay,—
When watching a ball's rapid motion
She suddenly starts, and turns frightened away,
Unable to hide her emotion.

She fancied she saw every round glossy ball
Assume an expression of horror,
And hundreds of heads, human heads, swiftly roll
And quiver in anguish before her.



IVAN TOURGUENEFF.

The first town's meeting held in Britain after the publication of Mr. MacGahan's letters was summoned at Darlington. It was crowded, indignant, and unanimous. Similar towns' meetings followed it in rapid succession in Durham and in Yorkshire. In reporting the temper of the first of these meetings to Mr. Gladstone I implored him to place himself at the head of what promised to be an irresistible movement in favour of the emancipation of Bulgaria. Most of the North Country towns had held their

The mallet that struck them was covered with blood,
And all were disfigured by torture ;
The infant's and virgin's, each innocent head
Seemed torn by a tiger or vulture.

She saw her own daughter, her pride and her joy,
Push straight to her feet close and closer,
The pale curly head of a poor helpless boy
Struck dead on the breast of his mother.
His lips seemed to move in reproof or lament,
Opposing no sound, no resistance. . . .
The Queen shuts her eyes and is ready to faint,
And cries for her Doctor's assistance.

To him she confides her distress and her dread,
Describing the horrible vision.
'No wonder (he said) that you dream of the dead
And all that Oriental collision !
The *Times* is enough to drive people half mad
With murders of various description !
Take tonic and rest, and forget all that's sad.
This is my advice and prescription.'

She yielded, and tried her dark thoughts to repress,
But could not be lured into slumber—
When lo ! there was blood on her own Royal dress,
The blood of the slain without number !
'Away with that blood !' she exclaimed in dismay ;
'I'll force British rivers to quench it.'
No, Madam ! that blood will be ne'er washed away,
And Heaven some day will avenge it."

J. TOURGUENEFF.

June 1876.

meetings and repudiated the Turkish Alliance before Mr. Gladstone published his pamphlet on the *Bulgarian Horrors*. It was, as he himself said, like Inkerman, a soldier's battle. The combat had been victoriously begun before the general appeared on the field. The popular notion that there were no anti-Turks before the publication of Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet was the theme of much animadversion by Mr. Freeman and others. Take, for instance, this extract from one of Mr. Freeman's letters dated April 21, 1878. He says :—

“ It may be personal feeling, but I do feel a little annoyed when people assume that all who act with us in this matter have followed Gladstone. See, for instance, two or three letters signed John Oakley, in *D.N.* Now, not to speak of those who are in Parliament, Bright, Cobden, Lord Grey, and others, we out of Parliament, I, Sir G. Cox, Sir A. Elton (who was in Parliament afterwards but not there now), said in 1854 exactly what we say now, only nobody would hear us. So I and others spoke about Crete in 1863. In this present war I had been at work before Gladstone said a word, so had Sandwith and others. We did indeed rejoice to get such a helper as Gladstone, and there is a sense in which he may be truly called a leader—but not a leader in the sense of having taught us views which we held before he did.”

Nothing is so extraordinary as the disappearance of pamphlets. They are often as difficult to procure a year or two after their publication as the back numbers of American newspapers. Mr. Gladstone's famous pamphlet on the *Bulgarian Horrors*, which sold by the hundred thousand, may still be consulted

in the British Museum, but elsewhere it is not easy to come upon a copy. This justifies the reproduction here of the concluding page of this passionate appeal by the greatest of British statesmen to the heart of the British people, an appeal to which there was an instant and a memorable response. After recapitulating the facts upon which he based his appeal, Mr. Gladstone brought his argument to a close in the following thrilling peroration :—

“ But I return to, and I end with, that which is the Omega as well as the Alpha of this great and most mournful case. An old servant of Crown and State, I entreat my countrymen, upon whom far more than perhaps any other people of Europe it depends, to require and to insist, that our Government, which has been working in one direction, shall work in the other, and shall apply all its vigour to concur with the other States of Europe in obtaining the extinction of the Turkish executive power in Bulgaria. Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner, namely, by carrying off themselves. Their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbachis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas one and all, bag and baggage, shall, I hope, clear out from the province they have desolated and profaned. This thorough riddance, this most blessed deliverance, is the only reparation we can make to the memory of those heaps on heaps of dead ; to the violated purity alike of matron, of maiden and of child ; to the civilisation which has been affronted and shamed ; to the laws of God, or if you like, of Allah ; to the moral sense of mankind at large. There is not a criminal in an European gaol, there is not a cannibal in the South Sea Islands, whose indignation

would not arise and overboil at the recital of that which has been done, which has too late been examined, but which remains unavenged ; which has left behind all the foul and all the fierce passions that produced it, and which may again spring up in another murderous harvest, from the soil soaked and reeking with blood, and in the air tainted with every imaginable deed of crime and shame. That such things should be done once, is a damning disgrace to the portion of our race which did them : that a door should be left open for their ever-so-barely possible repetition would spread that shame over the whole. Better, we may justly tell the Sultan, almost any inconvenience, difficulty, or loss associated with Bulgaria

‘Than thou reseated in thy place of light,
The mockery of thy people and their bane.’¹

“We may ransack the annals of the world, but I know not what research can furnish us with so portentous an example of the fiendish misuse of the powers established by God ‘for the punishment of evil-doers and for the encouragement of them that do well.’ No Government ever has so sinned ; none has so proved itself incorrigible in sin, or which is the same, so impotent for reformation. If it be allowable that the executive power of Turkey should renew at this great crisis, by permission or authority of Europe, the charter of its existence in Bulgaria, then there is not on record, since the beginnings of political society, a protest that man has lodged against intolerable misgovernment, or a stroke he has dealt at loathsome tyranny, that ought not henceforward to be branded as a crime.

¹ Tennyson’s “Guinevere.”

“But we have not yet fallen to so low a depth of degradation ; and it may cheerfully be hoped that, before many weeks have passed, the wise and energetic councils of the Powers, again united, may have begun to afford relief to the overcharged emotion of a shuddering world.”

After the appearance of Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet, and still more after his address at Blackheath on September 9, the floodtide of popular indignation submerged the whole country. But even in that heyday of anti-Turkish enthusiasm the close observer could discern two great streams or tendencies of popular opinion which, although temporarily united, were certain sooner or later to part company. The strongest, most logical, and the most vehement section of the Atrocity-mongers, who were nevertheless in a minority, were not content with merely demanding the ending of the Turkish Alliance, they insisted not less eagerly upon the duty of joining hands with Russia in order to compel the Turk to liberate the Slavs. The other section, numerically larger, consisted of those who contented themselves with demanding that the Government should withdraw from the Turkish Alliance without formulating any demand that they should co-operate with Russia in a crusade against the Sultan. To this last section with characteristic unwisdom rallied the advocates of peace and non-intervention, although it was obvious, even to the meanest understanding, that without concerted intervention peace was impossible. To which, with a not unusual selfishness, the abstentionists replied that they were going to keep out of it whatever the consequences might be to other people. The unfortunate division of the agitators into two camps,

the abstentionists and the coercionists, was destined to precipitate the war which if there had been no agitation might have been averted by a resolute support of Turkey. There were, roughly speaking, three policies before England: Lord Beaconsfield's Turkish policy, Mr. Gladstone's Russian policy, and Mr. Bright's abstentionist policy. Either of the two first might have averted war. The last rendered it inevitable.

The weakness of the agitation lay in the reluctance of the masses to recognise that they could not wash their hands of all responsibility for the subject races of the Turk by merely annulling the Turkish Alliance. So far as I know, the second town's meeting held at Darlington at the end of September was the only public meeting of that kind which directly by resolution called upon the British Government to order the British Fleet to Constantinople in order to co-operate with the Russian Army in reducing the Sultan to obedience. General Sumerakoff had brought a proposal from the Tsar to that effect. The Darlington town's meeting recommended that his propositions should be accepted. Other response there was none.

It was in reply to a letter of mine announcing that a second series of meetings was to be held in the North in support of the liberation of the Slavs that Mr. Gladstone wrote me the following letter:—

“FORD CASTLE, CORNHILL,
NORTHUMBERLAND,
Sept. 30, 1876.

“MY DEAR SIR,—I am not surprised that the energy of the North should take the lead in a supplemental movement as it did to a great extent in the former one.

"Before blaming the Servians for rejecting the prolongation of the quasi-armistice, we may fairly remember that when they asked for a suspension the Turks delayed and delayed their answer for a fortnight (I think), and only granted it when they had seemingly lost all chance of further military successes.

"The independence of Servia is a point on which I could not commit myself, but a public meeting is more free than I am. It appears that the Government is now tenaciously working out a policy, in which Lord Beaconsfield has announced at Aylesbury that they have not the support of the people of England—and of which Lord Derby has avowed that they will probably achieve it before Parliament could meet.

"I drop these remarks, from which it may be better not to quote now, as my name is rather often before the public; but the acute discernment with which your articles are written needs no help from me.—Your faithful servant,
W. E. GLADSTONE."

When Madame Novikoff arrived in London in the autumn of 1876, she found herself the centre of a sympathising group of friends, in the midst of a nation stirred to the depths by the atrocities in Bulgaria. The anti-Turkish agitation found expression in many channels. Miss Johnston and her friend were busily engaged in collecting money for the fugitives and orphans of Bosnia and the Herzegovina. There were sympathisers with Montenegro and collectors of funds for the relief of the wounded in Servia. The main current ran strongly in favour of Bulgaria. A few bolder spirits actively championed the cause of Russia. The Liberal party was distracted. A few of the old Whigs and some anti-

Russian Radicals clung to the leadership of Lord Hartington, the late Duke of Devonshire. But the party machine with Mr. Chamberlain as its most vigorous champion was entirely against the Turks. So were the High Church clergy, and what was of much more importance, so were the great body of the Nonconformists.

The flood of popular passion produced, as was inevitable, a counter-current of pro-Turkish sentiment. This found expression chiefly in the London newspapers and in London society. It found a centre in Stafford House, where the leading Turkophiles raised a fund for the relief of the sick and wounded Turkish soldiers. The Government, cowed for a moment by the outburst, had apparently bowed before the storm. Lord Derby on September 21 addressed a dispatch to Sir Henry Elliott, our Ambassador in Constantinople, directing him to lay the results of Mr. Baring's inquiry into the Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria before the Sultan in the strongest terms of reprobation, and to demand the punishment of the offenders. What is much more important, Sir Henry was instructed to propose as a basis for peace negotiations between Turkey, Servia, and Montenegro, the concession of the administrative autonomy of Herzegovina and Bosnia, and guarantees against maladministration in Bulgaria.

This was hailed by some persons as satisfactory evidence of a change of front. Such was not Mr. Gladstone's opinion. On October 13, immediately after his return from a visit to the North of England, where he reports, "I never saw such keen exhibitions of the popular feeling appearing so to pervade all ranks and places," he wrote to Madame Novikoff a letter on the all-engrossing subject of the hour. He

at first referred sympathetically to the death of her brother, "a heavy loss, but one attended with the consolations of conspicuous honour as well as of Christian hope." Then he proceeded to discuss with her what ought to be done in the East. She had expressed to him in a letter a hope that the infamous criminals whom the Sultan had promoted for their share in the Bulgarian massacres should be brought to condign punishment. Mr. Gladstone expressed his entire concurrence. He wrote :—

"The sentiments which you express with regard to the infliction of vengeance on the authors of the Bulgarian atrocities are such as I myself have imbibed and have endeavoured to express, in a letter written after Lord Derby's first utterances at the Foreign Office.

"I hear people praising him for the dispatch in which he demands severe punishments. I do not join in such praise. That dispatch means the continuance of the Turkish power in the provinces. I can hardly venture an opinion on the question whether the audacity of the Government of this country, the prejudices of the upper class, and the determined Turkism of the Metropolitan Press in many, nay in all, of its organs, will wear out the perseverances of the nation in its honest and manly convictions."

After promising her a copy of his second pamphlet on the Bulgarian question, he continued :—

"You probably have not seen the second of my pamphlets which contains the reprint of a speech of mine and some letters. In a day or two I shall have copies, and will send you one.

"I remain, at present, sorrowfully convinced that

the British Government is using the name and influence of this country, in the Councils of Europe, for the purpose of counteracting its desire for the effectual deliverance of the oppressed.

"I shall be glad to know how long you are to remain in town. We were there in September, but I have no date fixed, at this time, for returning there."

"When," he asked, "could he see her in London?"

On receiving her reply he wrote on October 17 :—

"Though I hope to see you soon in London, I must write without further delay.

"1. There is an undoubted and smart rally on behalf of Turkey in the Metropolitan Press. It is in the main representative of the ideas and opinions of what are called the 'Upper Ten Thousand.' From this body there has never on any occasion within my memory proceeded the impulse which has prompted and finally achieved *any* of the great measures, which in the last half century have contributed so much to the fame and happiness of England. They did not emancipate the Dissenters, the Roman Catholics, and the Jews; they did not reform the Parliament. They did not liberate the negro slave. They did not abolish the Corn Laws. They did not take the taxes off the Press. They did not abolish the Irish Established Church. They did not cheer on the work of Italian freedom and reconstruction. Yet all these things have been done, and done by other agencies than theirs, and despite their opposition. When I speak of *them* I speak, of course, of the majority among them.

"2. Unhappily the country is understood abroad mainly through the Metropolitan Press. But it speaks more through the Provincial Press, and I do



EDWARD A. FREEMAN.

not think you would find in this the same rally or reaction as in the Press of London.

"3. Still, the Upper Ten Thousand are a great power, and the Tory party throughout the country are generally with them. I will not say positively which power will prevail. Local elections to fill vacancies will in a great degree show ; not, however, one election, but a certain number. It may be six months or thereabouts before sufficient light is derivable from this source."

As the concluding paragraphs of this letter raise a new subject they are relegated to the next chapter.

Madame Novikoff's correspondence in those days was not so voluminous as it became in the course of the next twelve months. But even in those early days she had many staunch friends. Among these Mr. E. A. Freeman, the historian of the Norman Conquest, was one of the most vehement in his whole-hearted detestation of the Turkish oppressor and his friends in Downing Street.

One of the earliest, if not quite the first, of the letters addressed to her by Mr. Freeman bears the date October 20, 1876. It is a characteristic declaration of the faith of which through all these evil years Mr. Freeman was the most uncompromising exponent. He wrote: "My feelings against a war between England and Russia are as strong as those of any man in the country can be. And against unreasonable distrust or dislike of Russia I have borne testimony for twenty years or more. I trust in a day or two to be able to bear testimony again."

Writing on the same day to the *Daily News* (letter published October 24, 1876), Mr. Freeman reminded the British public that: "War with Russia would

be no longer—if it ever was—war with a mere intriguing and ambitious despot, but war on those who draw the sword for right. English interests are not really involved in the maintenance of Turkish tyranny. But if they were so involved, interest must give way to duty. We have no wish to see any aggrandisement of Russia ; but if the fault of our Government leaves us no choice between the aggrandisement of Russia and the bondage of Bulgaria and the other revolted lands, then we must choose the aggrandisement of Russia.”

On November 5 he wrote to Madame Novikoff:—

“ If our people, at least our Ministers, could be got to pull honestly along with yours to settle matters, the peace of the world might be kept. But just now we, who profess to have a Parliament, are as helpless as you who have none. Still, I have done my little bit to persuade people that there is, now at least, a Russian nation, with which it is madness to go and quarrel in a bad cause. Fools ask me if I ever heard of Poland—Tories were all against Poland—and I say we did not oppose Russia when she was wrong ; shall we oppose her when she is right ?

“ I am happy to say that I know very little of tip-top London society, and what it may call good taste. If the fine people like Turks they deserve to have Turks quartered on them, that is all.”

Mr. Freeman wrote on November 27, reporting the hearty response of audiences at Exeter and Manchester to his appeals on behalf of Eastern Europe. He wrote :—

“ At both places I found my hearers answer heartily to all that I said of the wickedness of a war with Russia, when I told them that, now at

least, they would have to fight not an ambitious despot, but a people stirred up in a righteous cause. Whether we are a majority I cannot tell ; but I am sure we are a large enough part of the English people to make even the Jew in his drunken insolence think twice before he goes to war in our teeth. You should do all you can to make people in England understand that, now at all events, Russia is a nation with a heart on the right side."

Even more hearty and uncompromising was the letter of Sir George W. Cox on the Servian defeat which Mr. Freeman enclosed to Madame Novikoff :—

"November 2.

"I do not know what to say about all this frightful news. The whole of all this murdering lies at our door ; and the only conceivable excuse for our rulers, who in vacation time are mere despots, is that they are given over to a strong delusion that they should believe a lie—the lie being the power of the Turk to reform. But it is hard to think that they can believe this ; and so the handful of so-called rebels are left to be mowed down by myriads of fiends, simply because it is against supposed English interests that the Russian should be lord of Stamboul. I certainly do not wish, and never wished, that he should be master of it, and if we had our way, or could have had it ten years ago, a confederation stretching from the Adriatic to the Euxine would have made this clean impossible. But the mischief was done when the fight of Navarino was called 'an untoward event.' And from that day to this the whole course of our doings in the East has been simply infamous. So far as I can see, we are utterly disgraced in the eyes of Europe ; and this is not pleasant, although it is a

small matter compared with the victory of righteousness. But is nothing to be done to prevent matters becoming still worse? Surely our executive must have their tether shortened, and decisions of peace and war must be taken out of their hands, whether this causes loss of time or whether it does not. The doing of this would deal the deathblow to diplomacy; and the day on which this happened would be a white one indeed.

"The slips of Sandwith's letter have come. What he says is not a jot more than I had supposed. One cannot help holding up hands and crying, "How long, O Lord, how long"; but we must do something too. If the outcome of all these horrors be to put down Tories and diplomacy, the world will have cause to rejoice. Sandwith may well talk of the Integrity and Independence of the Ottoman Empire as a cursed phrase. It has caused as much misery as the belief in witchcraft."

The war in Servia dragged on until November 1, when, under pressure from a Russian ultimatum, the Sultan agreed to an armistice of eight weeks. On the following day Lord Augustus Loftus, our Ambassador in Russia, forwarded a long dispatch recording a most satisfactory conversation with which he had been favoured by the Emperor, in which the Tsar emphatically disclaimed any wish to take Constantinople, and expounded the Russian policy in terms which Lord Derby declared were received by the British Government with the greatest satisfaction. The Emperor earnestly requested the Ambassador to do his utmost to dispel the cloud of suspicion and distrust of Russia which had gathered in England. That dispatch was received by the Foreign Office on



Photograph by W. & J. Downey]

[57, 61, Ebury Street, London, S.W.]

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD.
British Prime Minister, 1874-1880.

the seventh or eighth of November. On the latter date, Lord Derby in the name of the Government, expressed the great satisfaction with which he had received the Tsar's assurances,¹ and on the following day Lord Beaconsfield, by way of response to the Imperial appeal, did his utmost to excite the war fever against Russia by a speech in the Guildhall. He declared, in terms which no one misunderstood, although he did not refer either by name to Turkey or Russia, that "England was not a country that will have to inquire whether she can enter into a second or third campaign. In a righteous cause England will commence a fight that will not end until right is done." This speech was accepted everywhere at home and abroad as a direct menace to Russia. On the following day the Tsar, in his reply to a deputation which waited upon him at Moscow, declared that he was firmly determined to act independently if he failed in attaining the necessary guarantees for carrying out what he had a right to demand from the Porte. It was not until twelve days after the influence of Lord Beaconsfield's speech had saturated the public mind that his Government

¹ Of this dispatch Lord Napier and Ettrick wrote to Madame Novikoff: "Since I wrote to you we have had the dispatches from the Crimea. From an English point of view, there is much in them to give security and satisfaction. When I transport myself into a Russian point of view—I mean, if I was a Russian—I think I would consider that the Emperor had abounded rather too much in assurances and protestations to a foreign diplomatist, and I would regret that His Majesty said that he had permitted the departure of the volunteers to Servia—'*pour jeter de l'eau froide*,'—because the Emperor in this seems to repudiate more than is necessary, a national impulse which has its natural and honourable side (though an Englishman must regret it). On the whole as I have always believed in the humanity and honour of the Emperor, I must believe that he desires the preservation of peace, and I hope and believe that means will be found in the Conference to assure it."

consented to publish Lord Augustus Loftus's dispatch containing the Emperor's touching appeal for confidence, to which Lord Beaconsfield had given so brutal a rebuff. One week before that date the Tsar had ordered the mobilisation of a part of the Russian Army, and the troops were beginning to concentrate at Kischeneff. There is some reason to believe that Ministers were considerably alarmed by the outbreak of their inscrutable chief. During the whole of that trying time the Ministerial arrangement seems to have been that Lord Beaconsfield was to say what he liked, but that the control and foreign policy of the Party was to be in the hands of Lord Derby, Lord Salisbury, and Lord Carnarvon. Hence the more pacific were the decisions of the Cabinet the more bellicose were the utterances of Lord Beaconsfield. On the 8th, Lord Derby had expressed the satisfaction of the Government with the Tsar's assurances, and apparently the same Cabinet had decided to send Lord Salisbury as British representative at the Conference which was summoned at Constantinople for the purpose of settling the Eastern Question. Lord Salisbury had always been antipathetic to Lord Beaconsfield. His appointment was welcomed, especially by Mr. Gladstone, as an indication that the Cabinet was really about to adopt a more rational and more humane policy in the East than that which had hitherto been pursued.

Madame Novikoff, alarmed at these symptoms of approaching war, and grieved at the disparaging remarks of the Tsar about the Servians, wrote in distress to Mr. Gladstone, calling him her friend, at Hawarden. Mr. Gladstone replied November 14 :—

“ MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—I do not fail

to prize the title you kindly give me, but I dare not accept it until we are through this business; you might feel inclined to withdraw it. Test me a little longer. I have more to say." He then proceeded:—

"The history of nations is a melancholy chapter, that is, the history of their Governments. I am sorrowfully of opinion that, though virtue of splendid quality dwells in high regions with individuals, it is chiefly to be found on a large scale with the masses; and the history of Governments is one of the most immoral parts of human history. I have often to say much ill of my own countrymen or their governors. Must I not be equally free with all others? See me a little further on before you decide on my impartiality.

"Do not be too much alarmed at the speech of Lord Beaconsfield. . . .

"You who object to the Emperor's reply should consider the repeated provocations he has endured in silence.

"I have hopes it will make for *peace*. Forgive me for being sorry for what he said of the Servians, though I can understand the cause. I am told that those who mutilated themselves, and some who wounded their Russian officers in the back, were Wallachs, and that there are many thousands of them in the Servian army.

"I take the Emperor to be a most thorough gentleman; and I am not on the whole unhappy about the difficulties which the Turk has thrown in the way of the Conference. I think you may rely on Salisbury not to be, as some in the Government are, the slave of Disraeli."

Mr. Gladstone four days earlier had sent her the report of a meeting at Salisbury, which showed that

opinion was much divided in the upper and parliamentary classes. He said :—

“None of the good and great measures with which the name of the nation has been associated in the last fifty years have been promoted, as I have already said, by a majority of that class, only by a minority. Lord Hartington has to take account of all this. I am more free, thank God.”

Although he had expressed his satisfaction at the appointment of Lord Salisbury as British representative at the Constantinople Conference, yet he reminds her that :—

“Remember, I cannot guarantee that Lord Salisbury may not make mistakes, and grave ones. I always hope that responsibility and the practice of affairs will give to his judgment the requisite solidity.

“There is an England that wants Crete, but also, as I hope, a stronger and wiser England that does not.”

On November 22 he tells her he is still up to the eyes in his article on the Hellenic factor in the Eastern Question. Having heard that General Ignatieff had spoken disparagingly of the Greek claims, he proceeds :—

“We have to-day the dispatch of Loftus, dated November 2, with a full account of the pacific and Christian-like language of the Emperor that day. Lord Derby acknowledged it becomingly on the 3rd. The substance had been telegraphed, so Dizzy was in possession of it when he made his . . . speech on the 9th. This *greatly* aggravates the shame of it. We also see now, for the first time, the actual

terms of the basis for the Conference as drawn by Lord Derby. I must say I think Russia went to an extreme of moderation in accepting them. Russia has always been *accused* of promoting just so much reform in the Ottoman Empire as would keep up chronic irritation and give her grounds for interference when she pleased.

"All peddling plans, and such as those of Lord Derby, are in their most natural interpretation just adapted to favour a policy of this kind. As to 'independence,' it has now become a farce. Is it possible that this can have been accepted as a basis for the Conference? You observe, no doubt, the language and conduct of the Turkish as well as the Tory Press in England. I wonder Russia does not make use of the Press here also.

"I see it is reported to-day that Lord Salisbury is to offer the Porte twelve months to reform itself, and then foreign interference if results are not satisfactory. It would, in my opinion, be a *mockery*.

"Prince Gortschakoff speaks of the prejudices of 'England.' But what he judges by is, I think, *not* England. I have told you that in my opinion *the people* are unchanged. Now, there is no fairer sample of the people than the audience at a theatre.

"The incident too was at Liverpool, a very Tory town. The Dissenters again, who are most anti-Turk, do not go much to plays. I went there last Friday, and never was so received in the place. Rely upon it, these are tests as to the people, though it requires a multitude of such tests to amount to *proof*."

Madame Novikoff had complained of Lord Hartington's half-heartedness, and asked Mr. Gladstone for

his opinion of Lord Salisbury's appointment. He replied :—

“ I thank you much for your kind letter. On Lord Hartington's behalf I would say, remember that as *leader* he is obliged to bear in mind, more or less, opinions of the Fitzwilliam stamp, so as not to break with them. I need not, however, have written to say this. But I think it right at once to give you my opinion of Lord Salisbury, whom I know pretty well in private. He has little foreign or Eastern knowledge and little craft. He is rough of tongue in public debate, but a great gentleman in private society. He is very remarkably clever ; of unsure judgment ; but is above everything that is mean : has no Disraelite prejudices, keeps a conscience, and has plenty of manhood and character. In a word, the appointment of Lord Salisbury to Constantinople is the best thing the Government has yet done in the Eastern Question.

“ He is a man whose confidence is worth winning.”

In those days I was editing the *Northern Echo* at Darlington, in close touch with Mr. Gladstone. Here, for instance, was one of his brief incisive words of command sent to me on the eve of a public meeting called to protest against Lord Beaconsfield's menacing Guildhall speech.

“ HAWARDEN, *November 19, 1876.*

“ I look upon the mission of Lord Salisbury as a contradiction to the speech of the Prime Minister at the Guildhall, and if you meet again I venture to hope you will, while speaking plainly on the purposes in view, give to that mission a word of goodwill.”

The meeting was held, and the resolutions forwarded to Mr. Gladstone. He replied :—

“ HAWARDEN, *November 19, 1876.*

“ I view with extreme satisfaction that energy of conviction and character which leads the people of Darlington to watch with an unceasing vigilance the course of the Eastern Question, and thus to confute the pretence of those who think so ill of the people of this country as coolly to assert that in the interval between September and November they have changed their minds.”

It was precisely because the whole of the Ministerial press so persistently asserted that the people of the country had changed their minds that the St. James's Hall Conference was held.

CHAPTER IV.

ST. JAMES'S HALL CONFERENCE.

AS soon as the Prime Minister and his friends recovered from the confusion into which they had been thrown by the uprising of the nation against the traditional policy which allied Britain with the Turk, they consoled themselves by reflecting that it was only a temporary ebullition of fury, and that the country would speedily swing back to its ancient moorings. Hence the doors of the town halls had been hardly closed upon the last of the crowded meetings which had condemned the policy of the Government than the Beaconsfieldian Press declared the agitation was cooling down, the country was coming to its senses. Sir H. D. Wolff, to judge from his autobiography, sincerely believed that a meeting held in his constituency, Christchurch, marked the beginning of the ebb of the flood of anti-Turkish sentiment! The wish was father to the thought. To stamp out this fantastic illusion, meetings were held again and again all over the country. It was, however, manifestly impossible for the nation to hold public meetings every week in order to convince those who did not wish to be convinced that England was of the same opinion on Saturday as it had been on Monday.

In order to deprive Lord Beaconsfield of any semblance of justification for a belief in the apostasy of the nation from its newly declared policy in the

East, steps were taken in order to summon a national convention.

I have to thank Mr. J. Hyslop Bell, now coroner for Stockton, for the following clear narrative of the movement which led up to the holding of the St. James's Hall Conference. Mr. Bell was then the proprietor of the *Northern Echo*, and a leading member of the Darlington and South Durham Liberal Association. It will be seen from his statement that the original design of the promoters was much more ambitious than that which was ultimately carried out:—

“When the first flush of indignation at the Bulgarian atrocities had subsided there ensued a lull in the storm, which was immediately described by the friends of the Turks as the collapse of the great national movement against the Turkish Alliance. The demand for an Autumn Session, originally made by Lord Hartington at the Cutlers' Feast, was taken up throughout the country, but it was feared—and the event proved that the fears were justified—that the Government would not yield to the popular demand, even when it merely sought the assembly of a Parliament in which the Ministry commanded great majorities in both Houses. Earnest men in the North saw with dismay the prospect which lay before them. For months the Ministers were absolute. Checked for a time by the outburst of indignation, they would, it was feared, be only ready to resume their evil course when the minatory accents of the national voice became faint in the distance. It appeared to be imperatively necessary to devise some expedient whereby the national determination to ‘have done with the Turks’ could be embodied in such a shape as to compel the reluctant Cabinet to

acquiesce in the national decision. For some short time there appeared to be no method for securing such an adequate representation of the national determination. At last it occurred to Mr. H. J. Wilson, of Pitsmoor, Sheffield, in conjunction with Mr. Robert Leader, chairman of the Sheffield Liberal Association, that it might be possible to summon a representative Convention to give formal and emphatic expression to the will of England on the Eastern Question. The idea was no sooner conceived in Sheffield than communication was opened with Darlington, which town, as the birthplace of the Bulgarian Agitation, had acquired some little prestige for decided views upon England's duty in the East. The Sheffield suggestion met with a warm response. A preliminary meeting was held at Sheffield on the 30th September — Mr. Robert Leader in the chair. There were several Sheffield representatives present, and representatives from Leeds, Bradford, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Darlington. It was unanimously decided that it was advisable that a Conference should be held, but some difference of view was expressed as to the manner in which it should be called together. The Darlington representative, strongly supported by those of Sheffield, insisted upon the immense importance of making it in effect a representative assembly, composed of the elected Delegates of every constituency. This idea was embodied in a resolution proposed by the Manchester representative, to the effect that steps should be taken to summon a National Convention on the Eastern Question, and that such Convention should, as far as possible, be elective. The resolution was carried unanimously. Pending the meeting of the adjourned Committee, a second series of indig-

nation meetings was initiated at Darlington. The Darlington meeting was followed by others at Middlesbrough, Stockton, Brotton, Staindrop, Sunderland, and the Hartlepoons. At these meetings resolutions expressing sympathy with the Christians were passed unanimously, together with resolutions demanding the immediate calling together of Parliament for an Autumn Session.

"The Committee charged with summoning the National Convention found itself confronted by serious difficulties. At the outset the difficulty presented itself of the lack of any organisation which could be relied upon to assist in framing the national resolution. Although it was the desire of those who met at Sheffield as far as possible to preserve the Convention from any appearance of being a mere party gathering, it was found impossible to avoid altogether the employment of party organisations. It was resolved to appeal to the Presidents and Secretaries of the various Liberal Associations throughout the country, with a view to elicit their opinions as to the best method of making the projected Convention a really representative assembly of the nation. It was hoped that in response to that appeal the promoters of the movement might be able to address all the constituencies in the country, asking them, in public meeting assembled, under the presidency either of the Mayor, or other official chairman, to elect delegates to the Convention, in the same numbers as they have members in Parliament. By this means it was hoped that a thoroughly representative Assembly might be elected, which would be able to address Her Majesty's Ministers with the weight and authority which would spring from the consciousness of being the elected representatives of the nation.

As ministers refused to summon the legal Parliament by which alone their actions could be duly criticised, and as they persisted in employing the Constitutional prerogatives of the Crown, in order to carry out a policy repudiated by the nation, it was for the people to call into existence a new representative body which would embody the protest which the nation had made against the policy of the Government.

“These hopes were somewhat rudely disappointed. At the adjourned meeting at Birmingham (at which Darlington, Sheffield, and the other towns were represented) the project seemed in some danger of falling through. Birmingham—which, in educational matters, justly prides herself upon her leading position—was not disposed to take the lead in this matter. None of the towns would take the responsibility of appealing to the whole nation, and, owing to the reluctance of any town to lead, the Convention seemed for a time as if it were destined to perish still-born. The indefatigable Sheffield men, having failed in their attempt to summon a Convention for the Provinces, betook themselves to London, where they succeeded in eliciting a favourable expression of opinion from the highest authority in favour of their scheme. At the same time that they had succeeded in securing the approval of the most distinguished of the English statesmen, the subject was brought up in the Devonshire Club, when a member of the Darlington Liberal Association explained the exact position of affairs, and earnestly concurred with those present that the initiative in summoning a Convention, or Conference, should be taken in London. This suggestion was ultimately adopted. Communications were opened with the Committee, consisting of members of the Reform Club appointed at the

close of last session to watch the Eastern Question, and in a short time it was decided that this Committee, fortifying themselves with the names of the first projectors and sympathisers, should act as conveners, and appeal to the country to send up representatives to a National Conference. Circulars specifying the objects of the Conference as being—‘to consider the best means of promoting the favourable progress of the Eastern Question through the Concert of the Powers and nations of Europe ; and particularly—

1. Of obtaining for the Christian provinces of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria, a release from the direct rule of the Porte, with due guarantees for the equal right of the non-Christian population.
2. And also of diffusing through the country sound information on the various branches of the question,’—were issued to those whose names it was believed would prove useful in their respective localities, or from their reputation would have influence with the public at large, with a request that they would permit the use of their names as conveners. It was not till nearly the middle of November that a start was made in earnest to secure the names of conveners. It is even probable that but for the Premier’s Guildhall speech, with its reckless braggadocio, and the violent menaces of the Conservative newspapers, the Conference might never have been summoned. Lord Beaconsfield, however, did menace the country with an indefinite series of campaigns in support of the independence of the Ottoman Empire. The Tsar at Moscow accepted the Premier’s defiance, and for a time it seemed as if the nation were to be dragged into war. At that time of painful perplexity and profound dread the Conference, first projected in the later days of September, rapidly took shape. The most dis-

tinguished men in the land gave a cordial assent to the application that they should act as conveners. Among the first members of the peerage to give his assent was the Lord-lieutenant of the County of Durham. Names poured in from every side, and on November 27, an imposing array, including some of the most illustrious names in England, appeared as conveners of the National Conference, whose proceedings we report below.

“The publication of the list of conveners alone produced a profound political result. Although some feeble sneers were uttered in some Turkish quarters, the representative character of the list, the boldness of the enterprise, and the unmistakable conviction which animated its promoters, appalled the advocates of war. From that moment the attempt to lash the country into a frenzy of Russophobia was abandoned.”

The enthusiasm with which the publication of the names of the conveners was received in the country can best be illustrated by the following extract from one of many dithyrambic utterances which appeared in the Liberal Press of the North Country. The article is interesting as a succinct survey of the atrocity agitation and its significance in English history:—

“The Bulgarian agitation proved that Englishmen were worthy of their heroic ancestors, and that the fire of Cromwell and Milton still glowed in the hearts of the common people long after it had gone out in those of their Conservative rulers. The summoning of this Convention shows that the tact and the skill, the vigour and the resolution which enabled the great Parliamentary leaders of the Long Parliament to preserve the liberties of their country from the

encroachments of a despotic king can still be relied upon when the nation finds itself mocked by an arbitrary Ministry. But the Convention has done more than this. It has permanently enriched our sense of English citizenship. The list of conveners teaches even the dullest among us the wealth of intellect, the luxuriance of genius, which in this free country can be concentrated upon a political object. Too often men have regarded politics as a thing for politicians. This roll of conveners shows that our country commands the assistance of all her most gifted children in times of difficulty and of danger. It is almost like a new revelation to find that in endeavouring to guide the policy of England we are receiving the assistance of the most noted poets, philosophers, divines, and historians of our age. The appearance of Thomas Carlyle as a guide in Eastern politics is almost as great and as pleasurable a surprise as if the Apostle Paul were suddenly to rise from the dead and advise our countrymen as to the county franchise. The association of the foremost representatives of science, art, literature, theology, and the law in the service of our common country, is a memorable illustration of the wide meaning and deep significance of English patriotism. England was roused by the wail of anguish wrung from the tortured Bulgarians, and then it was seen, in Mr. Gladstone's noble words, that 'the great heart of England had not ceased to beat.' The bewildering suddenness, the startling unexpectedness of that memorable awakening have found parallels in history. Up to the middle of August England appeared to be given over bodily to 'the wretched quack-squadron.' At the beginning of September the whole nation was throbbing with intense enthusiasm, as 'full of lusty

life ' as in the palmiest days of the heroic past, and burning with desire to cleanse its soul from the damning responsibility of acquiescence in the crimes of those whom the Premier and his friends had defended in the name of England. Our country, once more animated by the sublimest of sentiments in the holiest of causes, seemed to have experienced a new birth. The heroic age seemed to have returned once more, and every man seemed, in Mr. Carlyle's noble words, to see that 'this world is a Truth and no Plausibility and Falsity ; that he himself is alive, not dead or paralytic, and that the world is alive, instinct with Godhead, beautiful and awful even as in the beginning of days.' The quacks fled away, and throughout the whole land was heard the unanimous voice of a repentant people."

The unanimity of a national repentance is never more than a hyperbole. Even in the highest flood-tides of national enthusiasm vast strata of the people remain cold and unaffected by the emotion of their neighbours. But the General Election of 1880, which was still far in the future, attested the reality of the repentance of the majority of our people.

Madame Novikoff received over ten invitations to be present at St. James's Hall—one of them from the Rev. Malcolm Maccoll, who was an indefatigable friend of Russia in those days. It was a novel experience for her, and a worthy initiation into the inner Arcanum of democratic statesmanship.

She sat in the body of the hall from twelve o'clock until the adjournment, and returned to the hall to await Mr. Gladstone's speech. It was a memorable gathering, and memorable for nothing so much as



Photograph by Elliott & Fry.]

REV. CANON MALCOLM MACCOLL.

for the whole-hearted enthusiasm expressed in the hall for Russia and the Russians. More than an hour before the time of opening, the entrances to St. James's Hall were crowded with delegates, and immediately after eleven o'clock the hall was filled. The hour which intervened before the proceedings commenced was utilised by the distribution of rules and regulations, and the manifesto of the Committee which forms the basis of the association formed the previous night. A few minutes before eleven o'clock, loud cheers announced the appearance on the platform of His Grace the Duke of Westminster, K.G., followed by the Bishop of Oxford, and many other notables. Almost before the little commotion subsided the Duke of Westminster called upon one of the Honorary Secretaries to read some letters which had been received from sympathisers who were unable to be present. The Secretary rose, but before he could speak a well-known figure appeared on the steps leading up to the platform. No sooner were these grey hairs and that slightly bowed form recognised by the meeting, than the whole assembly, instantaneously springing to their feet, hailed Mr. Gladstone with enthusiastic and long-continued cheers. There was no mistaking the earnestness, the enthusiasm, of these ringing cheers. Again and again they rang out through the whole of that crowded hall. As Mr. Gladstone, bowing and smiling, moved slowly along the front of the platform, the cheers continued and were redoubled, hats and handkerchiefs were waved continuously, and for a time it seemed as if the cheers would never cease. Mr. Gladstone took his seat on the right of the chairman, and then slowly, as if reluctantly, the vast assemblage ceased cheering, and resumed their seats. The Secretary then read letters from the

Duke of Argyll and Mr. Robert Lowe. Then the Duke of Westminster rose to make the opening speech. His Grace spoke very calmly, with little emphasis, but great earnestness, for upwards of half an hour. The first great outburst of cheers was elicited by the declaration that England was determined she would not go to war with Russia for Turkey. After defining what he believed the Conference desired, he said that for himself he was prepared to go further. The great interests of humanity towered above all purely English interests. England formerly had led the van in all efforts for the amelioration of the human race, and he hoped that she would resume her ancient place. To do so it was necessary that Russia should not only be supported in the Council Chamber, but the fleets and armies of England should be sent to Constantinople, not to oppose Russia, but to coerce the Turks. A great outburst of cheers showed that the Conference was prepared to go at least as far as its chairman. The first speaker was Sir George Campbell, M.P. for Kirkcaldy, the late Governor of Bengal, who had just returned from a prolonged sojourn in Turkey. Sir George spoke clearly and to the point. He neatly defined the Government of Turkey as the Government of superior races—not merely by an inferior race, but by the most part of an inferior class. The Turkish Government was not only utterly, radically, incurably bad, but was steadily becoming worse ; while the Christian races were by no means so debased as was represented. The Bulgarian atrocities, he declared, were worse than had been described—without precedent and parallel in the civilised world. The massacre of Glencoe, said Sir George, was a mere flea-bite to the Bulgarian horrors. After he had sat down a letter

was read from Dr. Pusey, dated Christ Church, Oxford, to the following effect :—

“MY LORD DUKE,—I much regret that I am unable to be present at the important meeting over which your Grace is about to preside. I thank God that He has united hearts, however unhappily divided on other matters, upon this great cause of suffering humanity. Although I must not speak as the representative of others, all with whom I am brought into contact sympathise deeply with this movement, and trust that this union of minds, differing on other subjects, will show that the interests of humanity are higher than all other temporal interests, and may tend to save us from the miseries and disgrace of a pro-Turkish war.”

And then the Rev. Wm. Denton, the well-known author of *Servia and the Servians*, and other works describing the inhabitants of Turkey, among whom he lived for several years, stood up to address the assembly. Mr. Denton was a forcible speaker, and his description of the condition of the Christians was pathetic and telling. He was followed by Mr. Anthony Trollope, a pleasant-looking, white-haired, gold-spectacled gentleman, whose speech had as its text and refrain that the time had gone by when the Turk could be allowed another chance from this country—a thesis which was thoroughly endorsed by the meeting. The entrance of Professor Fawcett, which took place during Mr. Trollope's speech, was hailed with loud and repeated cheers. Sir T. F. Buxton having spoken, he was followed by the Bishop of Oxford, a stately-looking cleric, whose striking countenance had a slight resemblance to Mr. Gladstone's. His conclusion was well delivered, gradually

rising from point to point until it culminated in a demand that England should right the wrongs of the oppressed, if necessary by arms. While the loud cheers which hailed this martial summons had died away, Mr. Henry Richard, M.P., the universally respected secretary of the Peace Society, stood up to speak on the responsibilities of England in Turkish misdeeds. Mr. Richard, concluding by a fervid peroration, declared that neither coin of English money, nor drop of English blood, should be spent in support of that organised barbarism the Ottoman Empire. The meeting rose to their feet and cheered lustily as Mr. Richard resumed his seat. The Rev. Prebendary Morse, Vicar of Nottingham, having spoken with commendable brevity, Mr. George Howell, as the spokesman of the working classes, denounced the Premier's conduct as criminal, and declared that the working class were unanimous in condemning the Turk, and although he was so much in love with peace that he was sometimes ready to fight for it, he believed that there would be no need for war. The Hon. Evelyn Ashley having made a spirited speech reviewing the diplomatic situation and declaring that peace could only be secured by the English fleet taking that of Russia in pawn, Professor Bryce followed with a description of the forces that were compelling the Tsar to action, and concluded by declaring, amid loud cheers, that Turkey should be told not only that we would not support her, but that we would coerce her. Dr. H. Allon, a tall, stately, silver-headed gentleman who spoke with singular animation and fervour upon the moral aspect of the question, excited some slight indications of hostile feeling by saying that Russia required to be watched while we were co-operating with her. He concluded a very vigorous speech,

demanding that England should adopt a policy of the removal of all restrictions of trade and of traffic. Mr. Sergeant Simon, who followed, introduced a novel element into the discussion by demanding, on behalf of the Jews, that they should be secured from the oppression of the emancipated Christians. Mr. Robert Leake followed, and then with a vote of thanks to the Duke of Westminster, the meeting adjourned for an hour. A spirited speech by Sir Henry Havelock in seconding the vote of thanks was noteworthy as containing a declaration by a soldier that in a war for Turkey he could not conscientiously draw the sword.

The evening session was opened by the Earl of Shaftesbury. The most notable incident in his speech was the vehement dissent elicited by his declaration that Lord Derby should be forgiven for his ill deeds if he carried out the principles of his dispatch on the Bulgarian atrocities. "Is there no place allowed for repentance?" asked the noble Earl pathetically, and once more the crowded meeting roared out an emphatic negative. Canon Liddon was the first speaker; and nothing could be happier than the manner in which he tabulated the reforms which must be demanded from the Turks, and led up to the point that a military occupation was the only possible method by which these reforms could be carried out. Lord Waveney next addressed the meeting, and Mr. (now Sir) George Otto Trevelyan followed with a brilliant speech, which was received with incessant outbursts of applause. He began badly, but after he had declared against the "factitious and mongrel patriotism which linked together English interests to tyranny, and English honour with Turkish infamy"—after that neat epigram Mr. Trevelyan warmed to

his theme, and spoke with admirable point and studied emphasis. "Let the Circassians," he said, "continue to earn their honest livelihood." The Chairman interposed with a correction. Mr. Trevelyan repeated, "Let the Circassians continue to earn an honest livelihood, by selling their own offspring to the seraglio at Constantinople"—(a roar of laughter showed that his point was taken)—"but let them not extend their commercial transactions so as to include the wives and daughters of their Christian neighbours. England," said Mr. Trevelyan, in conclusion, "will not spend a penny nor stain a bayonet in support of the Turks. Her heroes shall never fight side by side with the devastators of Bulgaria"; and then, with a parting shot at Lord Beaconsfield, "no matter how the fingers of the Premier may finger the hilt of the sword, the nation will take care it never leaves its scabbard." Amid tumultuous cheering, Mr. Trevelyan sat down, and Lord Arthur Russell took his place. After his brief speech, Mr. Freeman, who was received with tremendous cheering, made a very effective and scholarly speech. Mr. Freeman's brilliant style is familiar to all. His voice was slightly husky, but his periods were brilliantly polished, and one famous passage in his speech told with splendid effect. He asked: "Will you fight for the freedom, integrity, and independence of the Empire of Sodom? Perish the interests of England, perish our dominions in India sooner than that we should strike one blow or speak one word in favour of the wrong against the right. Will you go to war for the barbarian?" he asked. Three thousand voices roared a tremendous "No." Mr. Freeman was succeeded by the Hon. Leveson Gower, and a spirited speech by Mr. Broad-

hurst. Professor Fawcett, in response to repeated calls, stood up amidst enthusiastic cheers, and delivered one of the most incisive speeches of the evening. "Lord Shaftesbury has asked us to accept a policy of forget and forgive. I am not an unforgiving man, but there is one minister who can never be forgiven. That man is the Prime Minister." It is impossible adequately to describe the vehement outburst of enthusiastic cheers which hailed this outspoken declaration. The Rev. J. B. Brown said a few words. Lord Ailesbury moved a resolution demanding the formation of an association to disseminate information on the Eastern Question. Sir Thomas Bazley seconded it. The patience of the meeting had been somewhat severely tried. It was ten minutes past six, and the densely crowded assembly had for the most part not changed its seat since eleven o'clock. Nevertheless not a speaker had been interrupted, and even Lord Ailesbury was allowed to talk for nearly ten minutes without a single cry of "Time." At last, however, the crowning moment arrived. "Mr. Gladstone" was announced. The whole of the thousands present leapt to their feet, and Mr. Gladstone, as he stepped forward on the platform, looked down upon a tumultuous scene of excited humanity, every hand waving a hat or a handkerchief, and every throat cheering lustily as if it never would tire. A roar of applause, continued, repeated, and again renewed, and then once more the cheers broke, and then with three ringing cheers the vast audience sat down, and the applause slowly died away, and Mr. Gladstone stood silent before an audience equally silent. You could hear a pin drop as the orator commenced "My Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen." The speech upon which Mr. Gladstone

entered was prefaced by a humorous but exceedingly effective analysis of the change which the atrocity agitation had wrought upon the policy of the Government as described in the speeches of the Premier. The extent of the effect produced, he declared, was the justification of the course upon which they were about to enter by the formation of this association. Passing on to the Guildhall speech, he objected to the independence of the Ottoman Empire, and then suddenly adverting to the warlike boast with which that speech had been terminated, Mr. Gladstone declared that allusion to the contingencies of war was "a sting indeed, which was charged and overcharged with venom." (A vehement outburst of cheering, again and again renewed, hailed this weighty condemnation.) The effect of that speech was evil and mischievous, not merely on Russia, but especially at Constantinople. "Constantinople," said the speaker, "is described by all who know it as a paradise of nature. There are other paradises than those of nature—there is such a thing as a paradise of fools." What a laugh went up—vast and loud—from the whole of that enormous throng. Passing on to Lord Salisbury's mission, Mr. Gladstone cordially expressed his confidence in his lordship, but he asked "if it was Lord Salisbury's privilege or his doom to listen to that speech? What we want to know is whether that Guildhall speech was part of Lord Salisbury's instruction?" The object of the country was to terminate all connection between Lord Salisbury and that Guildhall speech, in order that on this great and difficult mission he might have a fair and clear stage in order to vindicate the honour of his country and minister to the welfare of the Eastern people. Another great cheer went up, which was renewed

with still greater emphasis, when he went on to protest against the misrepresentation of England in the councils of the world, by having her vast power and influence used as an auxiliary force in the interest of the power and corruption of the Ottoman Empire. Mr. Gladstone then went on with much pathos to describe the sufferings of the Bulgarians under atrocities now committed in detail, and then he turned to the practical point, "What is to be done?" Mr. Gladstone refused to enter into detail, but he insisted upon the limitation of the supreme sovereignty of the Turk. Without that, all reforms were idle dreams or miserable impostures. Some foreign intervention was absolutely necessary, but he felt that as for Russia we should judge her exactly as we should wish ourselves to be judged. England should watch Russia as jealously as any one pleased, but if we wished to thwart her, we must become competitors with her for the affections of the Christian populations. After referring in eloquent terms to the example of Canning at the time of the Greek revolution, he urged the examples of Italy, Belgium, and Greece as ample justification and reward for the encouragement which we had given in times past to nations struggling for independence. Amid ringing cheers he declared that until the Ministry acted up to the precedent set by Mr. Canning, and applied themselves cordially with Russia to secure the rescue of these populations from the direct sovereignty of the Porte, they never would be justified in crying "content." Mr. Gladstone, who had spoken for nearly an hour and three-quarters, then resumed his seat amid the same tempestuous cheering which had greeted his rising. It was close upon eight o'clock when the resolution was put and carried unanimously; and,

shortly after, one of the most momentous meetings ever held in the history of this country quietly dispersed.

It is easy to imagine the delight with which Madame Novikoff listened to the speeches, each speaker appearing to outvie the other in the vehemence of his repudiation of the Turkish Alliance, and the fervour of his adhesion to the proposed coercion of the Turk. She followed with intense eagerness the glowing periods of Mr. Gladstone's speech which brought the meeting to a close. She had never before sat under the spell of the Great Magician; she experienced even more than the rest of the audience the irresistible force of Mr. Gladstone's oratory. When he concluded, amid the long-continued cheers of the crowded audience, Madame Novikoff rose to go. She was not alone in feeling that it was the Red Letter day of her life.

It had indeed been a memorable day, a landmark in the history of the nations. For her in particular it was an event far surpassing her utmost expectations. But to the great political demonstration there was destined to be added in her case a not less signal personal triumph, an utterly unexpected public tribute.

Madame Novikoff was making her way slowly through the crowd that was thronging the staircase, when she was startled by hearing herself addressed by Mr. Gladstone. He also was making his way out. He had seen Madame Novikoff in the throng, and had hastened to her side. Offering her his arm, he conducted her out of the hall down the stairs into the street. He had just finished an exhausting speech, he was due at a dinner-party at which the Diplomatic Corps was awaiting him, but he insisted

upon bringing Madame Novikoff home to Claridge's Hotel, maintaining with her an animated conversation during all their walk.

Writing of this memorable evening after Mr. Gladstone's death, Madame Novikoff said :—

“ On more than one occasion it has happened that he has acquainted me of his intentions, the daring of which both charmed and affrighted me. But hesitation before a goal firmly resolved upon he never knew. ‘ God indeed he feared, and other fear had none ! ’ So, after the famous conference at St. James's Hall, organised under his superintendence in favour of the Orthodox Slavs in Turkey, I remarked that, in opposing thus the policy of Disraeli and the Queen, he was waging a revolution. He interrupted me : ‘ Quite so, that is just the word for it. But my conscience has nothing to upbraid me with, for it is pre-eminently a Christian revolution. Besides,’ he went on more slowly, ‘ I am not the only one who is doing so. The four thousand people who were present in the hall were almost unanimous in their adherence, and did not hesitate to express their sympathy with the noble part played by Russia in the Balkans. Did you not notice,’ he asked quickly, with a slight smile, ‘ that the only speaker hissed by the public merited this disgrace only because he sought to prove his impartiality by declaring that he was not specially a friend of Russia ? The funny thing about it,’ he added, ‘ is that the poor orator is by no means a Russophobe. I know him personally.’ I shall never forget that incident as long as I live ! ”

It was a pleasant walk, no doubt.

After seeing Madame Novikoff to the door of her

hotel and receiving her heartfelt thanks for the great blow which he had that day struck against the Turkish Alliance and on behalf of the Anglo-Russian entente, he hurried off to his dinner-party. He arrived an hour late, to find half the Ambassadors in London waiting for his arrival before they could sit down to dinner. "I am very sorry," said Mr. Gladstone on entering, "but I have not even had time to dress for dinner. You see I have just been taking Madame Novikoff home to her hotel, which has caused me to be a little late." And in the opinion of some of the diplomatists present the excuse was an aggravation of the delay. Others marvelled, and the story was used by the Turkish Press for the purpose of prejudicing Mr. Gladstone in the eyes of his countrymen.¹ The recent furious storm in a teacup occasioned by the fact that the Kaiser had written a letter to an English minister will enable us, even after this lapse of time, to understand what moral courage was displayed by Mr. Gladstone when he thus publicly associated himself with Madame Novikoff at and after the St. James's Hall Conference. Mr. Gladstone

¹ For example: "Madame Novikoff is a Russian agent in close relations with Count Schouvaloff, and she is the sister of General Kiréeff and sister-in-law of the Russian Ambassador at Vienna. This is the person with whom our ex-Premier was admittedly in close alliance, public and private, during the recent atrocity agitation. But when the climax of the pro-Russian agitation was reached, and its managers believed the overthrow of Lord Beaconsfield to be imminent, Mr. Gladstone, at the close of the St. James's Hall 'Conference,' left his seat, went up to Madame Novikoff, offered her his arm, and led her triumphantly through the bewildered crowd, in order to give them an earnest of the anti-Turkish alliance at last concluded between England and Russia, and thereby publicly acknowledged that his relations with that lady belong to the province of public life, and ought to be treated as matters of public concern. That also, we have no doubt, will be the opinion of the country when the nature of these relations has been more explicitly revealed."—*Vanity Fair*, March 3, 1877.

in this, however, set an example which few of those who came after had the intrepidity to follow.

Two or three years afterwards, writing to Mr. Gladstone on the subject of Madame Novikoff's influence in the part which she had played in the Eastern crisis, I made the observation which seems to me to express the *vérité vraie* of the matter: "Madame Novikoff has not changed our convictions, but she enormously intensifies them."

CHAPTER V.

“RUSSIAN DEEDS IN TURKESTAN.”

I MUST interrupt the thread of my narrative in order to dispose of an incident which is of some interest and importance. The controversy in itself is dead enough, but it has an interest for us in that it was the first time in which Madame Novikoff and Mr. Gladstone co-operated actively in influencing English public opinion in favour of Russia.

Mr. Gladstone's letter of October 1, the text of which, minus the concluding paragraphs, is given in the preceding chapter, raised a question in those last paragraphs which was hotly debated: Mr. Gladstone being the chief debater on one side, the *Pall Mall Gazette* taking the lead on the other.

Madame Novikoff in her letter had referred to the suppression of reports of atrocities. Mr. Gladstone replied:—

“I wish very much to remove one misapprehension from your mind. In this country every one can get a *hearing*. No atrocities, English, Russian, or any other, can be kept secret. For my part, I will say ‘God-speed’ to any one who lays them bare, *especially* if they be English.

“At this very moment my time is mainly spent in reading Schuyler's *Turkestan*. His errors I have no means of correcting; but I wish to learn,

and I am to tell in the next *Contemporary Review* whether, and how far, his evidence has been falsified. *If you can supply me at once with the means of correcting any errors into which he may have fallen, I shall be greatly obliged to you.* But it must be prompt, as my MS. must go off from hence in a few days, say on Saturday.”

The reference in this letter is to an attempt made by the pro-Turkish Press, and notably by the *Pall Mall Gazette*, to stem the agitation against the atrocities of the Turks by a counter-agitation against the alleged atrocities of the Russians in Central Asia. Mr. Eugene Schuyler had just published his book on the Russians in Turkestan, in which he had stated, that after the capture of Khiva, General Golovatschef gave this order to his troops who were sent to subdue the Yomud Turkomans:—

“You are not to spare either sex or age; kill all of them.”

Schuyler further stated that the Cossacks seemed to get quite furious, and cut down everybody, “whether child or old man.”

It was obvious what a handle this gave to the enemies of the Russians, and the *Pall Mall Gazette*, then edited by Mr. Greenwood, proceeded, as Mr. Gladstone said:—

“Not indeed to whitewash Islam in Bulgaria, for that is now despaired of, but to do the next best thing, viz. to blackwash the country which is its historical antagonist.”

Madame Novikoff at once responded to Mr. Gladstone's appeal by asking General Gorloff, the Russian Military Attaché in London, to supply Mr.

Gladstone with the information which he asked for. General Gorloff supplied her with a memorandum which Madame Novikoff sent to Hawarden with the remark that she feared it would be difficult, if not impossible, to secure its insertion in any English paper. Mr. Gladstone replied on October 20 as follows :—

“ Be assured there will be no difficulty in arranging for the publication of any statement by a Russian gentleman or officer on the subject of the Turkoman campaign. I will make some inquiry.

“ I have read the paper with great interest. Much that it contains I had already put on paper. It adds much that is valuable. It is my duty, in anticipation of criticism, to name to you the point in which it now requires to be strengthened. I refer to (Schuyler, ii. 356) the alleged order No. 1167 dated Khiva, July 6/18, for the complete destruction of *the Yomuds and their families*, as I read the words. Now I know not whether the original might have been accurately rendered. General Gorloff's statement goes to show that this order was not acted on, and by *implication* denies the order. ‘How could all this happen, if there were such an order as Schuyler pretends, “to kill women and children”?’ (p. 8).

“ But the existence or non-existence of such an order can of course be proved with time. Probably General Gorloff means to say that he has not on the spot the means of proof, but disbelieves it, and thinks he gives a practical confutation ?

“ I hope to be with you on Tuesday at three.—
Sincerely yours, W. E. GLADSTONE.

“ I understand you to say that General Gorloff would give his name. I shall venture to keep your enclosure over to-morrow.”

Two days later he writes again. He has had “a disagreeable Sunday business” finishing his article for the *Contemporary Review* on “Russian Deeds in Turkestan,” “but it is a work of truth and charity” :—

“I return General Gorloff’s manuscript, of which I have made free use in the way of citation for an article which I am about to publish in the *Contemporary Review* ten days hence.

“The English of General Gorloff’s paper is both clear and effective, it only wants *dress*ing in some very small matters of form. It seems to me that it ought to be published, with his name and on his authority. In my last, I think, I suggested its insertion. I think the *Daily News* would take it ; perhaps also the *Times* might. I could ask the Editor of the *Daily News*, but I think it would be best if General Gorloff asked whichever Editor he thought proper, in his own name and person.

“I hope to bring you a proof of my article. You will, I trust, find it just. I trust also that Schuyler is mistaken about the order. The *Pall Mall Gazette* says he understands Russ so well, but it may be misinformed. My article ends with an attack upon it.”

On October 23 Mr. Gladstone telegraphed to her :—

“Telegram received. I cannot hold out in resistance. Most happy to come, I hope by or before three.”

He arrived at Euston at 2.15, and drove round to Symonds’ Hotel with his travelling-bag in hand.

Madame Novikoff and he plunged at once *in medias res*. There was a difficulty about the publication of the letter. General Gorloff was quite willing to sign

it; but Count Schouvaloff objected. Without a signature it was difficult to secure its publication in the Press. But it was necessary for it to appear in the Press before the *Contemporary* came out with Mr. Gladstone's article, the proofs of which he brought to Madame Novikoff on October 23, in which the evidence of General Gorloff's communication was referred to.

Mr. Gladstone's ingenuity and resource did not fail him. He sent General Gorloff's manuscript to Mr. Hill, Editor of the *Daily News*, asking him to publish it, sending him the following imprimatur :—

“ Although this letter is anonymous, we have reason to know that it proceeds from a source which ought to invest it with considerable authority.”

Madame Novikoff had also an interview at her hotel with Mr. Hill, and told him how interested Mr. Gladstone was in General Gorloff's letter.

In the proofs of his *Contemporary Review* article Mr. Gladstone had referred to the letter as being written by General Gorloff. Finding that this was objected to by Count Schouvaloff, he modified the reference he quoted. He thus referred to the defence of General Kauffmann :—

“ As I find it supplied by a letter recently published in the *Daily News* with the signature of ‘A Russian,’ which, as I learn from a friend, has the sanction of General Gorloff, Russian Military Attaché in London.”

This letter appeared in the *Daily News*, October 27. It is necessary to give this explanation, for a malicious imputation was thrown upon Mr. Glad-

stone's good faith in the matter by the Jingo Press of that day.¹

It is all old history now, but it is interesting if only for the vigour with which Mr. Gladstone denounced the *Pall Mall Gazette*—a journal which in those days had, as I once remarked to Mr. Gladstone, “a most unfair monopoly of the brains of the pro-Turkish party.” The concluding passage from Mr. Gladstone's article revives the sonorous echoes of a bygone fight:—

“To expose cruelty is good ; but there are other things besides cruelty which ought to be exposed ; and among these is the deliberate fraud of a trusted or, in his own chosen phrase, a responsible adviser. Untruth, even when used for beneficent ends, is bad and base. It is here used for no good end. It is not meant to draw forth tears for Turkomans, not undeserving of them though in some respects they may be. It is meant to sow strife with the risk of bloodshed, and the end in view and the means employed are worthy of one another.”

¹ The London correspondent of the *Glasgow News* said: “General Gorloff, ambitious of winning distinction, had first intended to sign his letter with his own name, but his more prudent chief, Count Schouvaloff, formally interdicted him from doing so. It was then arranged between Madame Novikoff and Mr. Gladstone and General Gorloff that two letters should be sent to the *Daily News*—the first signed ‘A Russian,’ the second signed ‘Another Russian’ (this being Madame Novikoff's contribution)—and that Mr. Gladstone should refer to these in his *Contemporary* article as evidence in support of his denial of Russian atrocities in Turkestan. Thus it will be seen that the letter which Mr. Gladstone pretended to ‘find’ in the *Daily News* was practically put there by himself, for he ‘edited’ the letter before sending it to that journal, and it should be observed also that the ‘friend’ he casually refers to as informing him of a certain thing was no other than Madame Novikoff, who has now got the credit, according to diplomatic gossip, of having ‘converted’ Mr. Gladstone.”

"The article," said Mr. Gladstone to Madame Novikoff, "may make a row or may not. It is a very unusual thing to charge a newspaper, as I have done, with direct fraud and falsehood."

"Adieu," Mr. Gladstone wrote to her on October 30. "And God speed every effort to relieve Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria from Turkish administration. Rely upon it, that is the desire and prayer of the people of this country."

On November 3 Mr. Gladstone wrote :—

"You will see the reply of the *Pall Mall Gazette* to me. In my opinion it only deepens its disgrace.

"I am accused of being very Russian. I am not so! I am jealous because all the honour of the liberating work has been left by us to you. I am humbled because our London journals, or many of them, are content to bark and snarl at you, like a little cur at a passenger in the streets without daring even to bite his heel.

"This is to me very painful. It is part of the fruit, most bitter to my taste, of Disraelism."

Three days later he writes :—

"I was well satisfied with the *Pall Mall Gazette's* abusive reply. They convicted me of omitting to state not a matter of fact but simply an opinion of Schuyler's, which was not evidence, and a very absurd opinion."

The incident is also interesting because it led Madame Novikoff to write her first letter to an English newspaper. It was addressed to the *Daily News* à propos of the anonymous letter of General

Gorloff. Before sending it in to Mr. Hill, Madame Novikoff submitted it to Mr. Gladstone. He sent it back to her with the remark :—

“ I think no possible objection could be taken to your letter, which I return.”

The letter is as follows :—

“ LONDON, *October 26*, 1876.

‘ To the Editor of the *Daily News*.

“ SIR,—Few Russians will fail, I hope, to be grateful for your having published yesterday a letter concerning certain statements of Mr. Schuyler’s which have been cited by many people as an obvious proof of Russian cruelty.

“ To say or tolerate a word in favour of Russia is almost an act of heroism, and has for us the charm of novelty.

“ But some English readers seem to draw very curious conclusions from the above-mentioned letter. You will perhaps kindly allow me some few remarks on the subject.

“ It is said and repeated, that since we deny the accuracy of Mr. Schuyler’s statements regarding our Central Asian policy, we have no right to accept implicitly his accounts of the Bulgarian atrocities. Now it is perfectly true we unhesitatingly accepted his report, but we did so because it was quite in accordance with what *we already knew thoroughly* regarding Turkish misrule. If, instead of confining themselves to the translation of absurd libels (so strongly condemned by public opinion in Russia), the English newspapers condescended to follow what was written in all the Russian journals from the

very beginning of the Slavonian insurrection, they would have been amply prepared for the disclosures made by the *Daily News* and Mr. Schuyler.

"The service rendered by the latter to a cause so extremely dear to every Russian made it very unpleasant, nay even painful, to draw attention to some mistakes which he made about ourselves. I don't think this would have been done even now, accustomed as we are to be misjudged, if it were not for the unworthy way in which attempts have been made of late to compare Russia to Turkey.

"What Russia wants is certainly not to subjugate the Christian provinces. All the grandeur of the present movement amongst Russians in favour of their tortured brethren would disappear the moment any mean or material object were in view. The Russians who fight for the liberation of their co-religionists know beforehand that they have nothing to expect but privations and sacrifices. If we cannot imitate, let us at least appreciate them !

"ANOTHER RUSSIAN."

On November 15, at the close of a long letter (see last chapter), Mr. Gladstone says :—

"One word more"—reverting once more to the old Turkestan controversy.

"Cannot General Kauffmann's order be got at in the War Office at St. Petersburg, and cannot Gromoff also be got at ? A prompt and good explanation would have an admirable effect."

It interested me much to find Mr. Gladstone so impatient at the calm indifference of the Russian authorities to the calumnies of their enemies. "They say, what say they, let them say," is too much the

motto of the Russian Government. How often have I not chafed against their nonchalance and their failure to take advantage of the opening given by their assailants for a crushing retort.

The polemic was fierce while it lasted, but it was a side issue. Mr. Freeman summed up the common-sense view of the discussion when he wrote :—

“ If each nation in Europe is to take up the evil deeds of every other nation, none can come out with clean hands. But in the case of the Turkestan stories, what can I do ? I have no means either of confirming or contradicting Mr. Schuyler’s statements. I can only argue, as I mean to do, that true or false they are irrelevant to the present question.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONSTANTINOPLE CONFERENCE.

THE St. James's Hall Conference had given Lord Salisbury a friendly lead. The key of the whole position lay in the cordial co-operation of England and Russia in coercing the Turks. When Lord Salisbury reached Constantinople he found the Russian plenipotentiary ready to receive him with open arms.

Lord Salisbury went out to Constantinople primed with every kind of suspicion of General Ignatieff. For months before his departure nearly every English paper had been stuffed with the most violent denunciations of the Russian Ambassador. Lord Salisbury had been taught to regard Ignatieff as a very Machiavelli, who would be his chief antagonist at the Conference. But no sooner did he reach Constantinople, and see Ignatieff as he really was, than he threw his suspicions to the winds, and entered into the most cordial relations with the man against whom he had come prepared to work with all his power.

According to General Ignatieff, the change was brought about very simply and in the most natural way. He met Lord Salisbury at dinner soon after his arrival, and in the course of conversation the English plenipotentiary remarked to his Russian vis-à-vis, "I am told that you are a terrible man,



GEN. NICHOLAS IGNATIEFF.
Author of the Treaty of San Stefano, 1878.

and that you have so many spies and agents all over the East." Ignatieff replied, "It is quite true that I have many helpers. But who are they? I wish you would go into the provinces and see for yourself about my agents. Paid agents I have not; not one rouble do I need to pay for help. But you will find that every one who fights for his country, who fights for his faith, who struggles for freedom in all these lands, is my friend, is my agent, is my helper. I have thousands of these—yes, twenty thousand—and they are my strength. But you are the support of the savagery and tyranny of the Turks."

Lord Salisbury did not relish the remark, but the truth of it seems to have gone home. When they met again, General Ignatieff found him still suspicious and antagonistic. "But," said he, "Lord Salisbury is a labouring man, and I am a labouring man. When I saw that he was in earnest to know the truth, I put all my papers at his disposal, and gave him all the help I could in every way. 'Do not believe anything I tell you,' I said to him, 'until you have verified it for yourself, and then you will see if I tell you the truth.'"

Lord Salisbury accepted the challenge and was satisfied with the result. General Ignatieff had given him a memorandum upon the Turkish Constitution. Lord Salisbury read it, and told him that he was satisfied as to his correctness, and that the Turks had really been lying.

Hence he was not indisposed to meet General Ignatieff loyally, when the latter said to him, in his simple, direct fashion, "Now you must make up your mind whether you are a good Christian or a good Turk. If you have decided to be a good Christian, then I will take your programme as my own, and support you loyally throughout; but if

you are for Turkish tyranny, then I will take the Russian programme, and will press it with all my force. That will certainly make it much worse for the Turks."

"Lord Salisbury," said the General to me, "was a good Christian; so was Lady Salisbury. That was where I met them. I knew very well both his qualities and his defects. He is impulsive and vehement. I made play to have these qualities on my side rather than to have them against me, and I succeeded. But I did so only by doing exactly as I said—by supporting him faithfully and loyally. I did not mix him," said he, using a curious phrase, "indeed I did not. I spoke the truth and acted straightly. If you look in the Protocols of the Conference, you will see that I always supported him. No one could be more moderate, more pacific than I. It was Sir Henry Elliott, and Lord Beaconsfield, and Prince Bismarck who made that Conference to fail, not either Lord Salisbury or myself. . . ."

When the Conference was proceeding, a vigorous attempt was made to confine the area which was to be endowed with autonomous institutions to the north of the Balkans. General Ignatieff went at once to Lord Salisbury and said to him, "What will they say in England, where the Conference originated, in response to Mr. Gladstone's agitation against atrocities committed south of the Balkans, if the Conference only protects the Bulgarians north of the Balkans, who have not suffered, and leaves unprotected those on whom the atrocities were committed?" Lord Salisbury at once admitted the justice of this objection, and he insisted at the Conference on the extension of the autonomous institutions to all the territory inhabited by the

Bulgarians. What is called "the Big Bulgaria of San Stefano" was thus in reality nothing but the precise and more scientific definition of the area which had already been marked out as Bulgarian by Lord Salisbury at the Conference. Lord Salisbury was the joint author with General Ignatieff of the great Bulgaria, to destroy which, a year later, Lord Salisbury nearly plunged England into a Russian war.

The friendship between General Ignatieff and Lord Salisbury continued unbroken until the Conference dispersed. This, however, is anticipating. For us the centre of interest is not Constantinople, but London.

General Tcherniaieff, fresh from his heroic efforts to hold the Turkish army at bay by a rabble of Servian militiamen stiffened by four thousand Russian volunteers, came to London in December. He stayed at the same hotel as Madame Novikoff—Symonds's, in Brook Street—which became the headquarters of unofficial Russia, regarded with but scant sympathy by the official Russia in Chesham Place.

General Tcherniaieff saw many good anti-Turks, including Canon Liddon, but missed seeing Mr. Freeman, to their mutual regret.

An amusing incident occurred during his visit. The caricaturist of *Vanity Fair* waited on General Tcherniaieff and asked him to give him a sitting. Tcherniaieff refused, with some indignation. "The fellow had the impudence to tell me," he said, "that he most particularly wished me to sit to him, because my face lent itself so admirably to caricature." The fellow spoke the truth, for Tcherniaieff was no beauty. But that fact rendered his irritation all the more natural.

In the midst of the wrathful fulminations of the historians, Professor Tyndall went on his way un-

moved. Absorbed in science and agnosticism, his correspondence shows no trace of passionate enthusiasm for Slav or for Turk. But Professor Tyndall was pleased at the success of the St. James's Hall Conference, because he thought it must have comforted his friend, Madame Novikoff. Although no great anti-Turk, he took Madame Novikoff in December to see the Nestor of our philosophers, who was as good a Russian as ever breathed.¹

On December 9 Professor Tyndall wrote, "his address is 5 Cheyne Row, Chelsea," and a few days later he took her to Cheyne Row to present her to Thomas Carlyle. Professor Tyndall wrote, December 7 :—

"Miss Aitkin, Mr. Carlyle's niece, who takes such good care of him nowadays, called here to-day and communicated to me the intelligence that a visit from you any time before three o'clock in the afternoon will give her uncle great pleasure. The old man is full of courtesy, and would come to you, instead of asking you to go to him, were his health stronger."

The visit which followed was the beginning of a friendship which lasted till Mr. Carlyle's death.

¹ On the eve of the St. James's Hall Conference, Mr. Carlyle wrote : "For fifty years back my clear belief about the Russians has been that they are a good and even noble element in Europe. Ever since Peter the Great's appearance among them, they have been in steady progress of development. In our own time they have done signal service to God and man in drilling into order and peace anarchic populations all over their side of the world. The present Tsar of Russia I judge to be a strictly honest and just man, and, in short, my belief is that the Russians are called to do great things in the world, and to be a conspicuous benefit, directly and indirectly, to their fellow-men." And again in 1876 he said, with characteristic force : "The newspaper outcry against Russia is no more respectable to me than the howlings of Bedlam, proceeding as it does from the deepest ignorance, egoism, and paltry national jealousy."

Mr. Gladstone returned to Hawarden after the St. James's Hall Conference. He wrote to Madame Novikoff on December 13 :—

“ The last accounts I heard before leaving London were to the effect that the Turk would get upon his high horse (as we say) and refuse everything. To use another of our proverbs, his independence is certainly on its last legs, whatever his territorial integrity may be. If General Ignatieff is aware of this, as he is sure to be if it is true, he will take good care not to go to issue with Lord Salisbury, *i.e.* to break with him, before ascertaining the intentions of the Porte.

“ I am glad, however, to observe the report of concurrence between them, but I do not like the floating rumour that England is to propose that a time be allowed to the Porte to execute reforms, with an intervention afterwards if necessary. That proposal would in my opinion be preposterous.

“ Bishop Strossmayer has written to me again. He is wholly and strongly for autonomy as the only satisfactory settlement. In this I agree with him entirely, and think that though foreign occupation may be a needful measure, it will only be a *stage*, and an uncomfortable stage, on the journey.

“ Russia has every motive for making effective proposals. If she does not make such proposals, it will be believed that her policy is not really to relieve the Christians, but to keep up irritation between them and the Porte, so as to leave a door open to intervention whenever she pleases.

“ God prosper the Right.”

Mr. Gladstone certainly did not do things by halves. In this letter we see him inciting Russia to

insist upon drastic reforms. In the same letter he reverts to the Turkestan question :—

“ I have been reading Captain Burnaby’s *Ride to Khiva*. Whatever be the rights and the wrongs of the Yomud Tartars, I think the way in which he handles it is very bad. Were I in the place of the Russian Embassy, I should keep a sharp eye on all publications of this kind, with a view to answering them when necessary. In this country the answer can always be given, and this publicity and equality in discussion I have always thought to be the great advantage we possess, as compared with some other lands.”

“ Were I in the place of the Russian Embassy ”—how often I have felt like that when chafing at the stolid indifference of the diplomatists in Chesham Place to the Press campaigns of their enemies. If this is to be more Russian than the Russians, the above letter shows I was in good company.

Madame Novikoff promptly replied, asking what statements in the Press would be replied to if he were Russian Ambassador. Mr. Gladstone replied :—

“ *December 18.*

“ When I suggested vigilant observation of the English Press with a view to the correction of errors, I did not expect the honour of being consulted in detail, and indeed I do not think myself well fitted for the purpose. On this occasion, however, I would advise your not taking notice of Lord John Hay unless you have original information or strong facts in your possession to show humanity on the part of the Montenegrins. For my part, I think that if they are humane they must be angels indeed, as well as

heroes, which I take them to be. It is now too clear that that wretched Turkish dominion is apt to damage all the races with whom it comes into conflict. If they remain brave, perhaps, like the Greeks of 1822-27, they grow cruel. If they continue mild like the Bulgars, they lose their spirit and their manhood, an indispensable condition of high excellence for a people.

"My wife goes to town about the 26th. My own movements are, as they have been through the autumn, uncertain. Only rely on my doing whatever the great question of the East may seem to require of me. But I hope I may find you in town.

"I am reading Moltke on the campaign of 1829: it is most interesting."

As it was clear even to Lord Beaconsfield that war for the Turk was condemned by the national sentiment, the War party fell back upon their favourite tactics of working up popular feeling against Russia. They rang the changes upon Central Asia, Siberia, Poland, and the Jews. In December 1887 it was the turn of the Poles and the Uniats.

The Turkophile party held a demonstration at Stafford House in mid-December. Mr. Gladstone wrote, December 22, to Madame Novikoff :—

"I am grieved, and somewhat ashamed of the Stafford House proceedings. . . . All along I have told you many of our great folk and rich folk are in the wrong in this matter—as they always are; but the nation is right.

"A Roman Catholic lady, a friend of mine, is sadly disappointed at my having said nothing of the Russian proceedings enforcing conformity upon the Poles, and sends me a little work, anonymous, *Les Missionnaires Muscovites chez les Ruthenes Unis*

(Paris, Typogr. Polmer et Joseph), which contains deplorable narratives. Do you know it? Or can you tell me where and under what title to get the *Russian* statement of the Polish case? For the credit of my friend, I must say that she seems to think as you and I do in the Eastern case.

"It is now a time to look on with awe at the Christmas-tide they are keeping in Turkey: to-morrow, I see, is fixed for the grand imposture of all, the Constitution, to appear, and as I hope to explode. God in His mercy send the Right and the Truth a good deliverance.

"Shall I say a Happy Christmas to you? Yes. An anxious one indeed it must be: but you are seeking the right, hoping the right, contending for the right; so it may be happy too as well as anxious."

The inquiry about the persecution of the Uniats touched Madame Novikoff on a sore point. The pamphlet seemed to her a Roman Catholic libel, and she said so with customary vehemence. But Mr. Gladstone, with a keen eye to the importance of preventing any attempt to "blackwash" Russia, returns to the charge on Christmas Day:—

"So strongly do I share your impressions with regard to Roman Catholic partisanship, that where it exists, it exists to the great prejudice and suspicion as to all I read. Of course it would be a great error on this account to thrust aside allegations of fact, instead of detecting and exposing them.

"At the same time, I am far from thinking that *you* are in any manner bound to undertake such a duty. Neither are my views as to the Eastern Question governed by a reference to other controversial matters, in Turkestan, Poland, or elsewhere. When

I asked you if you could supply me with a statement on the Russian side, it was from an old habit of mind—peculiarly, I think, needful for a politician—which makes him desire to hear both sides, where there are two. This desire has been most decidedly evoked since I last wrote. I received from an anonymous ‘Lady’ that *Black Book* which I think you once mentioned to me. The opening statements greatly repelled me, because it appeals to British selfishness, and is also written in a Turkish or anti-Russian sense, or both. But it contains most grave statements of fact, such as must excite nothing less than horror in those who accept them, and such as, I think, merit and loudly call for confutation. They are of the most personal character as to names and places, though the dates, I think, are rather scanty or indistinct. It is with reference to such works as those that it seemed to me well that the agents of any foreign state should keep their eye upon the Press in England. I can well conceive that the circumstances of Russia in Poland might account for or even excuse severity; but I must *hope* that nineteen-twentieths of what is said in the *Black Book* can be effectually denied. I am amazed that the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which attempted to do a stroke of business in the Yomud case, has not laid hold of this tract. If it struggle into notice, I shall not be surprised at its producing a considerable effect until answered. I am sure you will construe indulgently what I have said, and I will now try a little to describe the state of my mind at this junction on the main issue.

“It seems that we, and all Europe, are to present recommendations in common with you; and to receive a refusal, which affects us all alike.

“Thereupon we are all to retire, and to fold our

hands, and to leave it to Russia to be the arm of Europe.

“This staggers me a great deal. I do not understand or relish such a recession into the shade. It seems to me that Europe has no right to cast upon Russia the undivided responsibility, or to make over to Russia the undivided honour. I thought the conduct of Austria and Prussia at the time of the Crimean War mean enough ; and it will not please me if we follow suit. Justice to Russia, to the Turk, to the Rayah, all appear to me to demand a different course.

“My wife will be most ready to see or hear from you. She goes up to-morrow. Our daughter’s vocations may tie her rather closely.—Repeating best and kindest wishes at this most solemn return of Christmas, I remain sincerely yours,

“W. E. GLADSTONE.”

Madame Novikoff replied by wishing him many returns of his birthday, and pointing out how impossible it was for her to reply in detail to all the calumnies of the Roman Catholic enemies of Russia. Mr. Gladstone’s reply is as follows :—

“HAWARDEN, *December 29, 1876.*

“MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—I am very sensible of your kindness in sending me your congratulations on the grave event which befalls me to-day. My years slip fast away. I had hoped that each of them, as it passed, would find me by a few steps more and more removed from the sphere of noise and public contention. This day it is far otherwise. In relation to my personal hopes and plans I have lost ground and not gained it ; but this I am very far from grudging when I consider the wide and deep interests at stake and the solemn call that

sounded, so to speak, in my ears to do the little that I could for my fellow-creatures and fellow-Christians in the East. I sent you the *Missionnaires Muscovites* yesterday. Do not suppose (if you have supposed) that I recommend it. And again let me say it is not to you that I preach the policy of replying to grave attacks. When I saw the name of your family on the page of the *Black Book* I simply passed on and paid it no attention, for there were no particulars of place, dates, or circumstances. But when I went farther on, I found the case of other persons very different; and I cannot say how strongly I think that statements such as are made in that pamphlet—for example, about two persons named Berejsha and Gust—deserve the attention of those concerned with your Embassy and Government. They are certainly statements which if not confuted will be believed.

“I have not yet thanked you for kindly offering me Wallace’s *Russia*, but I would propose to wait a little, and to find it for myself when I come to town, if you recommend it as worth reading; for I am sorry to say that in this country there is always much trash published on the question of the day, it being evidently computed that when the appetite is stimulated by events, the public will not be over-particular about the quality of the food.

“Again, God send us a good deliverance at Constantinople, and a passage from the region of chicanery and fraud into the light of clear day. May your Christmas and New Year too be good when they arrive.—Always sincerely yours,

“W. E. GLADSTONE.

“P.S.—Speaking of books good and bad, by far the best English book I have seen on Eastern matters

is the large volume of Miss Irby and Miss Mackenzie entitled *The Turks, the Greeks, the Slavons*. The accounts of Servia in it are extremely interesting, and it is, what we rarely write, a painstaking book."

The day before Christmas, Mr. Freeman wrote reminding her that she had promised to spend New Year's Day at Somerlease, and reiterating once more his favourite doctrine that London was not England. He wrote :—

" *December 24.*

" Your brother's letter is just what I should look for ; but I hope you make him fully understand that the Jew Disraeli does not represent England, and that London fashionable circles do not represent it either. I certainly did not expect falsehood either from Lord Carnarvon or from Sir Stafford Northcote ; but they have stooped to sit in the seat of the scorner, so I suppose they carry out the law that a man cannot touch pitch and not be defiled."

The Conference at Constantinople met for the first time on December 23. The same day the new Ottoman Constitution was proclaimed by Midhat Pasha. The second meeting of the Conference was held on the 28th, the third on the 30th, the fourth on January 1, and the fifth on the 15th. The Powers made their proposals, to which the Turks made their objections and then brought forward counter-proposals of their own. Finally, on the 15th, the demands of the Powers were reduced to two points as an irreducible minimum of reform. The first was that Governors appointed by the Sultan with the approval of the guaranteeing Governments should be appointed for the Bulgarian provinces and for Bosnia and for

Herzegovina; and secondly, that an International Commission nominated by Europe without executive powers should superintend the establishment of the reformed Government in the Balkan provinces. This irreducible minimum was pressed upon the Turks with unanimity by all the Powers of the European Concert.

The language of Lord Salisbury was all that could be desired; but the Turks did not listen to Lord Salisbury, they listened to Lord Beaconsfield. They remembered his speech at the Guildhall. They were continually assured by his organs in the Press that England would never take any part in coercive measures to enforce the will of Europe upon the Sultan, and many of the more blatant Beaconsfieldian organs declared, in season and out of season, that if Russia attempted to compel the Turks to submit to the will of Europe she would find herself opposed by the armies and navies of Great Britain. The one chance of a possible settlement was that Lord Salisbury's vigorous words should have been supported by a decision to use force to compel submission. It was not necessary to organise a co-operative international crusade; all that was necessary was that Great Britain should have co-operated with Russia for the purpose of compelling the Turk to say *Kismet*, recognising that the will of Allah was unmistakably manifest before his eyes. Unfortunately, the joint coercion of Turkey by England and Russia was the last thing which Lord Beaconsfield desired. He still hankered after an Anglo-Turkish Alliance, and his friends in the country diligently fomented the anti-Russian feeling, upon which, when the time came, he hoped to be able to rely for precipitating England into war with Russia. The Turks, well informed

concerning the sympathies of Lord Beaconsfield, were unable to divest themselves of the belief that they could always as a last resort depend upon the support of Great Britain. They rejected the irreducible minimum of the Conference as contrary to the integrity, independence, and dignity of the Empire. That decision was arrived at on January 18. On the 20th the Conference was dissolved, and Europe was left face to face with the impending war.

It can well be imagined with what feverish interest Mr. Gladstone and the British nation watched the progress of events at Constantinople. Time and again Mr. Gladstone wrote to Madame Novikoff expressing his doubts and fears. Writing on New Year's Day, he says :—

“ In reading the telegrams from the East, I am utterly lost and bewildered. In one I read of Lord Salisbury's menacing intimations and the Sultan's positive refusal. In another of the discussion of details with formidable dispositions and prospects, and the reduction of differences to small dimensions. My own convictions of what is needful do not vary in the smallest degree, and I really believe the same of the English people at large. I cannot say I am grieved at Sir H. Elliott's coming away, if it is true.”

Again, on the following day, he returns to the subject :—

“ HAWARDEN, *January 2, 1877.*

“ MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—My convictions on the situation in the East are of infinitesimal importance ; but such as they are, they are already in full before the world, and every day strengthens them.

"Any plan that retains Turkish authority, within the geographical limits to be affected, as the source or sanction of administration, is in my view worthless.

"I say this equally with regard to the civil powers and with regard to the force, whether it be called military or police force, on which the civil authority has to rely for the execution of its decisions.

"So long as the Porte is the fountain of authority, either in civil acts or in the force that is to give effect to them, firstly, it will be impossible to efface that domineering Mahometan sentiment which has determined the relations of Islam and non-Islam in daily life; and secondly, we shall be playing over again that game of reliance on Turkish promises which, with the light of present experience, we know to be nothing else than a miserable farce.

"A guarantee dependent on the Turk for its execution becomes thereby no guarantee at all.

"Whether the Porte should have any and what voice, or veto, in regard to the composition of the new authority, as was contemplated in the case of Greece by the original Protocol of 1826, is another question; but of course it could not be the ruling voice.

"Were I to trust some of the statements afloat in the newspapers—and I have no other source of information—I should assume that all the labours of the year were ending in utter abortion. For instance, the statement that a trial system is to be established, and that after a time the Powers are to meet again and see whether or not the Turk has performed his promises. Anything that leaves performance, either as to civil acts or as to the force behind them, in his hands, is in my view a sheer mockery.

“Of the real state of the negotiations I know absolutely nothing, and nothing therefore of the manner in which these opinions of mine may bear upon them.—Believe me sincerely yours,

“W. E. G.

“I should not deny that even what I call a mockery for the present epoch might have value for the future, as opening a door through which hereafter we shall have to walk.

“P.S.—2 p.m. I am glad to see the Turkish counter-project is summarily set aside, according to the news of to-day. What impudence !”

It would have been well for the peace of the world and for the future of the East if the counsels of Hawarden rather than those of Constantinople had been allowed to prevail.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE EVE OF WAR.

MADAME NOVIKOFF returned to Russia in January 1877.

The situation in the East was critical. Lord Salisbury had come back from Constantinople after the failure of the Conference. Lord Derby absolutely refused to have any part or lot in the concerted coercion of the Turks, which was the only alternative to a Russo-Turkish war. In Dasent's *Life of J. T. Delane*, Lord Derby is reported as saying, "If they want to coerce the Turks they must find some one else to do it. I will not." The pretence of concerted pressure afforded by the withdrawal of the Ambassadors from Constantinople was speedily abandoned. It was soon evident that, despite all the professions of desire for the liberation of Bulgaria that were wrung from ministers by the atrocity agitation, the British Government would do nothing to secure the freedom of the East.

War between Russia and Turkey, or the abandonment of the Christians of the Balkan, were the alternatives which every day were seen more clearly to be inevitable. The hopes and fears of all England centred on the action of Russia. The Gladstonians hoped that she would not betray the Slavs. The Beaconsfieldians feared lest she should seize Con-

stantinople. Between the two conflicting streams of tendency passion rose high.

Just as Madame Novikoff was leaving England, she received a quaint letter from the Rev. E. S. Ffoulkes. Writing from Wigginton Rectory, Banbury, this clerical Quarterly Reviewer told Madame Novikoff :—

“You must work hard for Russia just now—harder than ever, and pray more : pray that she may rise to her destiny, and fulfil it in a high and honourable way, disdaining any but the highest motives and the highest aims. She will certainly be victorious, unless in her heart of hearts she means to be selfish : for though she may cheat man with ease if she tries, she can never cheat God, whether she tries or not. I have prayed long and earnestly for this crisis : though I have said little.—I have not joined in any popular demonstrations, because none go far enough for me. But I must avow my doubts whether the full time has come.

“Your General Ignatieff is an able man : no doubt the ablest of the Plenipotentiaries ; but I doubt his being the man to carry things through. If so, they must stop half-way till the right man comes. Whenever he comes I would give a good deal to be his aide-de-camp. But at present I see no symptoms of him. And the sight of so many second-rates dealing with a first-rate question is not inspiring. However, God can bring it about even with these tools, if He will : so that I have not yet lost all hope.”

When pious parsons in country rectories were praying that the Lord of Hosts might arise and smite the Infidel hip and thigh, even though He might be cumbered with second-rate helpers, other men of

different opinions were moved to different modes of expressing their convictions.

It is difficult, after the lapse of a quarter of a century, for any one to realise what depths of passion were stirred by the agitation against the Turkish Alliance. The deepest depths were not reached until the early months of 1878, but already in 1877 we had a foretaste of what was to come. Under the stimulus of the Jingo Press, which morning, noon, and night hymned the praises of Lord Beaconsfield, Mr. Gladstone was overwhelmed with truculent and filthy letters, compared with which Mr. Freeman's allusion to "the drunken insolence of the Jew" is quite inoffensive. Nor did the patriots confine themselves to impious and unclean expressions of their evil wishes. They resorted to all manner of devices for the purpose of annoying the statesman whom by a natural instinct they hated. One of these was the manufacturing of threatening letters, one of the most grotesque of which Mr. Gladstone handed to Madame Novikoff. It is anonymous as usual, and was dated Surrey, December 16, 1876. It runs thus :—

" TO MR. GLADSTONE, M.P.,—

" SIR,—I have been engaged by one of the Secret Societies of Servia to make an end of your existence, on the score that you are doing your utmost to make us to be in subjection to Russia, a people who bring massacre, misery, and horror in its train. I warn you to alter your course ere it is too late. Five days I am allowed to execute my commission, and if you have not altered your course, 'prepare.' "

It was not surprising that "patriots" of the baser sort should have eagerly seized the opportunity

afforded them by the frank and open friendship between Mr. Gladstone and Madame Novikoff to assail the Liberal leader, who had been guilty of the heinous offence of corresponding with a Russian lady at a time when the Prime Minister was menacing Russia with war. The story was industriously put about that Mr. Gladstone had written certain letters of a compromising character to Madame Novikoff, who was politely described as a "notorious agent of the Russian Embassy in London." A Sheffield correspondent having seen this report, wrote to Mr. Gladstone, calling his attention to the story. Mr. Gladstone at once replied as follows:—

"January 18, 1877.

"SIR,—To your obliging letter I must reply in haste. The extract you have kindly sent me appears to me to embody one of those vulgar intrusions into private life which are commonly attended with unscrupulous rashness in assertion. That any correspondent of mine on the Eastern Question is in possession of such letters as it describes is entirely false.

"I cannot appear in print in such a matter, but the assertion I have just made may be freely repeated on my authority.—Yours very faithfully,

"W. E. GLADSTONE."

That none of Mr. Gladstone's letters to Madame Novikoff were of a compromising character is now clear from a perusal of the letters themselves. But in the minds of the Turkophiles of that time to have written any letters of any kind to Madame Novikoff was enough to have compromised any British statesman. For she was a Russian, and a Russian patriot, the sister-in-law of a Russian Ambassador, and therefore, of course, so the Jingo logic ran, a conspirator intriguing for the ruin of the British Empire.

Vanity Fair talked largely about the dealings of the British Numa with the Muscovite Egeria, and in an article entitled "The Great Agitator Unmasked," published as "startling revelations well calculated to sap the national confidence in emotional and humanitarian politicians," the story of the way in which Mr. Gladstone and Madame Novikoff had collaborated in preparing the answer to Mr. Schuyler on "Russian Needs in Turkestan."

Not to be outdone by its rival society journal, the *Whitehall Review* published what it called the Schouvaloff - Gladstone - Novikoff conspiracy as expounded by one of its staff to Midhat Pasha. As a curiosity the first part of this absurd fiction may be quoted :—

"The first matter upon which I entered was the Schouvaloff - Gladstone - Novikoff conspiracy. I explained to His Highness that Mr. Gladstone, although a good man, was extremely fond of power, and also that he entertained towards his great and successful rival, Lord Beaconsfield, feelings of the most rancorous and unscrupulous hostility. When he (Mr. Gladstone) was hurled from office in 1874 his Party went to pieces, and there seemed no hope of its returning to power during his lifetime. Two years later the Eastern Question came to the front, and with it Mr. Gladstone's opportunity. The English people know little of foreign politics, but have quick sympathies for human suffering. Wherefore they could not believe even Russia capable of fomenting insurrection in Turkey, and, on the other hand, they were keenly moved by the fabricated account of Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria. Prince Gortschakoff knew his man, and Madame Novikoff was induced to enlist the ex-Premier as the champion of the Bulgarian Christians. Mr. Gladstone

lent himself readily to the plan. At Madame Novikoff's suggestion estranged Dissent was bought with Scotch Disestablishment and the agricultural labourers with the County Franchise. How the conspiracy had prospered everybody knew, but whether it was destined to ultimately succeed I could not tell."

Among Mr. Gladstone's papers which he handed over to me to aid me in telling the story of the anti-Turkish agitation I found a letter from a Seaforth correspondent enclosing the following cutting from a Liverpool paper as containing "a serious charge against your character":—

"Mr. Gladstone and Russian Agents.—Russian agents are working the Liberal party in this country through Mr. Gladstone, have arranged election programme for him, and selected the planks."

To such accusations and insinuations are poor mortals exposed who endeavour to serve their countries in the sacred cause of international brotherhood. Whether Mr. Gladstone answered this last epistle I do not know.

Mr. Gladstone was too sincere to be discreet. But he was somewhat disgusted by "those vulgar intrusions into private life," and for the moment he appears to have resolved to be a little more guarded in his communications. At the end of January, Madame Novikoff had written suggesting to him the advisability of registering his letters to her, a suggestion at which no one who has had any experiences of the post-office can wonder. Mr. Gladstone, however, took alarm, which also was not unnatural considering the preternatural suspicion and distrust which per-

meated the atmosphere. On February 6 he wrote from Harley Street to Madame Novikoff:—

“ I wrote to you on the 22nd ult., and I am sorry to find that my rapid and rather changeful movements during a round of visits in the West have prevented my receiving with due promptitude your several letters, to which I now reply. Do not wonder if I say I should not like even to register a letter to you, or allow it, by so slight an act, to be supposed that I wrote to you something peculiar in its nature. This absurd construction would be put upon either my writing often or writing with any the slightest indication of secrecy. It is true that in this matter I have no secrets; but I am compelled to be cautious of signs which are among us misinterpreted by the very class that have least excuse for the misinterpretation. I will now run very briefly over a few points.

“ 1. What may happen on Thursday when Parliament meets is quite uncertain. Our custom is to wait for authentic possession of the facts before debating. And it will only be after Thursday next the Blue Book can be presented. In a short time there may be serious debate.

“ 2. I cannot answer for the tone or the vote of the Parliament. In the House of Lords, Turkish or anti-Russian sentiment will have a blinding effect. In the House of Commons, the Ministerial majority is remarkably compact, and the Irish Roman Catholics have also thus far behaved badly, in deference to the trumpet sounded from Rome. It may be three years yet before the Parliament is sent back to the Constituencies.

“ 3. I consider that we (the agitators!) have

gained two points: (a) the re-establishment of a European concert; (b) retirement from a disgraceful position of virtual complicity with Turkey. So much I conclude is done. But much remains to be done, all of it requiring careful consideration.

“4. The individual local elections, of which there have been remarkably few, are in truth the best guide, though short of a perfect one as to the national feeling.

“5. But I can now repeat strongly that in my opinion the nation is sound. In the western agricultural counties I have found even more enthusiasm than the north. In making a series of private visits I have been pursued everywhere at towns and railway stations by the popular enthusiasm, and that in my opinion is wholly due to the public feeling on the Eastern Question.

“6. Another word, a daring one, for I am going to advise. I should tell you first that about Khiva I do not care two straws. Further, I can believe it quite possible that there may be a *bonâ-fide* pressure for its annexation to Russia. Nevertheless I should most deeply lament the annexation if it took place at the present time, for it will give to our Turkish party exactly the handle that they want. And taking into view the declaration of the Emperor through Count Schouvaloff, I feel that it will do great and serious harm.

“The real issue, so far as I can see, will arise when the question shall assume this form: Is Russia to be left alone to execute the will and work of Europe? I learn with pleasure the fall of Midhat Pasha.”

Madame Novikoff in Russia and her correspondents in England watched with alarm and indignation what

seemed to them the attempt by the Governments to evade the fulfilment of their obligations to the Christians of the East. The letters of Mr. Freeman at this period give a faithful picture of the anxieties with which the English Liberals of the Gladstonian school regarded the situation. On Mr. Gladstone's visit to the western agricultural counties he stayed with the Marquis of Bath at Longleat and the Bishop of Wells. Mr. Freeman, who spent some days with Mr. Gladstone at Longleat, reports on February 7 that "Lord Bath is as zealous as anybody." When Mr. Gladstone came to Wells, Mr. Freeman continues:—

"I had him out here to a luncheon, when I gathered some people together and had a little speech-making. His reception everywhere in Somerset was just as it should be. Since then I have had Goldwin Smith and Dr. Sandwith, so Turks have been cursed mightily."

Which we can well believe.

Parliament opened on February 8. "I wish I had got a seat," wrote Mr. Freeman, who in those years was very anxious to enter Parliament,—an ambition which was never realised.¹

¹ Mr. Freeman was seriously anxious to stand as a candidate in the Liberal interest. He wrote on February 15, 1877:—

"I did think of Wilton—I don't know the place, save by its early history and by often going by it, but it is one of those rural boroughs which are, in fact, small counties. While I was musing, the papers said that Bouverie was going to stand, so I thought no more of it. Then somehow Bouverie vanished, and by that time Norris of Bristol was safe up. I know him a little; a clever fellow, but simply frantic about Disestablishment; some, to be sure, might say that I am frantic about Turks. This morning I see that Oldham is vacant. I know nothing about the place. Do you know anything, or could you cast out any feeler? I must in any case wait to be asked, because I could spend very little money in any case, and had rather not spend any."

It is not very surprising that he failed to realise his desire, and on the whole it was better that it should have been so.

Nearly a month later, on March 2, Mr. Gladstone wrote announcing the impending publication of his pamphlet entitled *Lessons in Massacre*. He thus described its *raison d'être* to Madame Novikoff :—

“ Whatever happens, you may be sure that I am always at work on the great question which now, and for me, absorbs all others. I am preparing a pamphlet which I hope to publish next week, in which I hope to show upon official evidence that the Turkish Government, ever since the Bulgarian Massacres, has acted to the utmost of its power and daring with a view to teaching its people to *repeat them* when they have an opportunity.

“ I am doing this—1. Besides other reasons, because the proof could not be given in a speech to the House of Commons with adequate detail. 2. Because our Parliamentary vindications almost compel us to suspend discussion while our Government are engaged in concert with the other Powers in devising some practical answer to the Russian inquiry.

“ I have not the least expectation that they will suggest or share in any answer really good. Until last August they did as much mischief as they could ; and since last August as little good. You will remember that I have repeatedly expressed to you my conviction that the heart and mind of the nation are right on this question, and are not represented either by the upper class or by the Metropolitan Press. And also that the best test of my being correct or otherwise in this opinion would be found in the local elections which are held from time to time to supply vacancies in Parliament. As far as the evidence has yet gone it supports my view. One election, indeed, has been held at Wilton, where young Sidney Herbert has been

retained as a Tory, but three-fourths of the voters are tenants of his brother and another Tory peer, and the population is too small (a few thousand) to be of real significance. Another election of much the same kind will be held in a few days for the little town of Launceston. But we have had two real elections. Halifax, with a constituency of 12,000 voters, has returned a Liberal by a majority of 2000. Oldham, with 29,000 voters, where we were *beaten* at the last election by 200, has yesterday returned a Liberal by a majority of 700. Also at Cheltenham (4300 voters) we had a Liberal candidate waiting for a vacancy who was of Turkish sentiments. He has on this account been turned off, and they are going to take one who is on the Christian side. So far this is all well. But the process is slow. Had we a dissolution I believe it would turn the scale of Europe. As it is, we are substantially in the hands of Russia. That is to say, if she acts with vigour, in whatever sense, it will make an opening for action here. But we remain entirely in the dark, and are tossed about by conflicting rumours. Will she demobilise, or halt, or go into Roumania, or make resolute war, or pursue any special policy at Constantinople? In Europe generally there is a reign of heartless and unmitigated selfishness among the Governments. But I adhere to my trust about the English people."

Mr. Gladstone's misgivings were shared, and more than shared, by Mr. Freeman. Writing on February 26, he said :—

"Depend on it, the Jew's policy is to hold back, do nothing, let Russia go to war, and then pick some excuse for attacking her. I should doubt the rest being wicked enough, or Derby being sharp enough

to know this, but the Jew will hook them in as his forefather did his father and his brother."

Mr. Freeman was a very frequent correspondent in those days, and his letters were always racy and sometimes brutal. In these epistles Lord Beaconsfield is always referred to as "the Jew," while Lord Derby is referred to in equally unpleasant fashion.

Writing on March 4, when General Ignatieff was beginning his tour on behalf of the Protocol, and a fortnight after the German Emperor in opening the Reichstag had expressed his conviction that the peace of Europe would not be broken, Mr. Freeman wrote to Madame Novikoff :—

"I have two letters from you and some scraps, all which I answer in kind. We are wondering and hoping and fearing. There is little to be hoped here. The Jew Government seems to have made up what it is pleased to call its mind to do nothing but to give the Turk a 'year of grace,' that is, to let him go on as he has ever done, just to save Lord Derby the trouble of doing anything. When he hears of the next Batak he will look puzzled, and say that he did not expect it would be so serious. But you, who are not ruled by a Jew, but whose Emperor we have learned to look on as an honest man, can it be that you are going to back out after all? The newspapers all seem to think as much, but we cannot bring ourselves to believe it. Dr. Sandwith, on the other hand, says the war will begin this very month.¹ Now you understand our position. We look on Russia as we look on any other European

¹ Dr. Sandwith was not quite right. War was not declared till April 24.

Power, neither better nor worse, believing that Russians and Englishmen alike are neither angels nor devils, but men capable both of good and evil. Therefore we have no unworthy suspicion of you, and at the same time we don't want to leave everything to you. Therefore we hold that the work would be much better done by England and Russia joining together than by Russia alone. By so doing, each Power could help the other for good, and hinder the other from mischief. But if this cannot be, if we are so tied by our Jew that we can do nothing, while you are free from Jews and can do something, then in God's name go forth and do the work by yourselves, rather than it should not be done at all.

"Don't mind what Turks or Jews or Turkish or Jewish-minded people anywhere say of you—the more the abuse, the more honour—at least, I have got to the stage of thinking so."

Mr. Freeman wrote frequently to me in those days, for he was kind enough to have a high opinion of the *Northern Echo* as a trumpet with which the North-countrymen could be summoned to battle with the common enemy. He wrote me on March 8:—

"We must stir. See the *Times* is veering again. On the whole, I believe that Russia will move. Then the Jew will find some trick to attack her. We must have meetings to the tune of the Precedent of 1827. Canning and Navarino. Our policy is to hinder exclusive Russian ascendancy by frank co-operation.

"If Gladstone's word is needed, ask him to speak it. It will come better from you than from me.

"There is a belief in Russia that the moment Russia declares war England will seize Constantinople."

The next letter of Mr. Freeman's is of some personal interest to me, because it contains a flattering reference to the paper of which I was editor, the *Northern Echo*. It was my first introduction to Madame Novikoff; although entirely impersonal, I was at that time unknown to Mr. Freeman save by correspondence. Mr. Freeman wrote on March 11 to Madame Novikoff :—

“ Here is a scrap which I thought you might like to see from a local paper, the best paper in England, sold for the small sum of one halfpenny daily. The same paper had a day or two ago a capital article on Montenegro, which I sent to the Prince. He has a secretary who translates English things to him.

“ We are simply on tenterhooks to know what is going to happen. Here we are hopeless. The Jew doubtless means positive mischief, if he can get a chance. Lord Derby is doubtless simply puzzled, and is seeking for any means to keep him from doing anything. I don't want to see you at Constantinople, and I don't believe you want to see yourselves there. But if you ever do it, the man who will have done most to get you there will be Lord Derby.

“ Mark, if a man is only moderately dull, his dulness is found out; if he reach the very sublime of dulness, he passes for wise.”

Madame Novikoff, who was then at Moscow, replied to Mr. Gladstone's letter of March 2, ten days later, as follows :—

“ I find no words to thank you for your most interesting and important letter. If you are in the dark on our policy, so are we on yours. The terrible report is spread here widely, that if Russia should

declare war, as we all earnestly desire, England is going simply to occupy Constantinople and keep it for good as her own property. Now, Turkey is rapidly going to her own suicide, and certainly can never be a dangerous neighbour to Russia, but England is superior in every sense—except that we could never be governed by a Jew—and it makes one hesitate to undertake such a serious war under such circumstances. Of course, were the Opposition now in power, Christian provinces would be allowed to breathe, but as it is now evident that—in spite of the generous elements brought forth chiefly by you and partly by the Duke of Argyll, whose name is also pronounced here with great respect and admiration—the Government of England does not pay much attention to lofty feelings, and has other objects in view. Still, happen what may I think—and not I alone, but thousands of Russians think as I—it is our duty to defend the Christians if nobody else has pity upon them.

“When you can spare a few minutes and give me a very great pleasure, write me again. My best love to Mrs. Gladstone.—Ever yours sincerely,

“OLGA N.”

The Russian Government, confronted by the prospect of a great war, for which they were unprepared, made a last despairing effort to avert the necessity for independent action by sending General Ignatieff¹ round the Courts of Europe to secure their

¹ General Ignatieff arrived in London March 14, and left for Paris on March 22. He spent Sunday, March 18, at Hatfield as the guest of Lord Salisbury, and was received by the Queen on Tuesday.

The Protocol negotiations were regarded with grim suspicion by both parties in England. Delane of the *Times* said he did not care to meet General Ignatieff, as he was quite sure the thing was a “do.”

assent to a Protocol, the object of which was to avert the otherwise inevitable war by holding out a prospect of concerted action in the future if the Turks did not carry out reforms in Bulgaria.

This move was regarded with indignation in Moscow, an indignation which Madame Novikoff thus described after the crisis was passed :—

“The last effort to avert war was the Protocol! By that famous document official Russia consented, for the sake of the European Concert and the Peace of the Continent, to postpone indefinitely all action on behalf of the Southern Slavs, receiving in return for this sacrifice of her mission a promise that the Great Powers would watch the Turks, and after a period of time, not particularly specified, when it had once more for the thousandth time been demonstrated to the satisfaction even of the diplomatic mind that Turkish domination is utterly incapable of reform, improvement, or other amelioration than its total destruction, the Powers promised—oh, great concession!—to consider what should then be done to save our tortured brethren from the Ottoman horde.

“Those who lived in the very heart of the national movement can never forget the terrible forebodings of those dismal days. We all moved under the pressure of a great dread. Was it to end thus? Were all our sacrifices to be sacrificed? Was the blood of our martyrs spilt in vain? Was Holy Russia Holy Russia no more, but a mere appendage to cosmopolitan St. Petersburg? When the news came that the English Cabinet was insisting upon alterations we breathed more freely. ‘Demobilisation!’ we cried. ‘No, it is not demobilisation; it is demoralisation! The Emperor is too noble, too good a Russian; he

will never consent to that!’ But then, again the news came that even that was to be accepted; and the sky grew very dark overhead, and we went about as if in a chamber of death, speaking in low accents and oppressed by a terrible fear of that national dishonour which we Russians, strange as it may appear to some people, dread even more than death! At last, to our great relief, the cloud lifted, the darkness disappeared, for the Turks rejected the Protocol; and the declaration of war was as grateful to us as the bright burst of sunlight in the east after a long, dark, stormy night.”

General Ignatieff did his best to avert the war, for which he knew Russia was unprepared. He saw Lord Beaconsfield, who sounded him about a possible British occupation of Mitylene, against which General Ignatieff protested,¹ visited Lord Salisbury at Hatfield, and saw Mr. Gladstone the day before he left London.

Among Mr. Gladstone’s papers I found a curious memorandum prepared by him to read to General Ignatieff. It was partly in French and partly in English. But it was not used, Mr. Gladstone probably finding it easier to speak “without paper.” What he had intended to tell General Ignatieff was that,

¹ Of Lord Beaconsfield, as is but natural, Ignatieff speaks with little enthusiasm. The only thing which impressed him about the then Prime Minister was his hankering after Turkish islands. He talked even then, more than twelve months before the Anglo-Turkish Convention was signed, about occupying Cyprus, and in conversation he suggested to General Ignatieff the possibility of an understanding with Russia on the subject of the Bosphorus, provided that England were in occupation of Mitylene. General Ignatieff did not encourage the idea; Mitylene, he said, was too near, it was only two hours’ steam from the mouth of the Dardanelles. Lord Beaconsfield did not press the discussion. The negotiation for the Protocol failed, the Turks attacked Montenegro, and the war began.—*Truth about Russia*, pp. 285–86.

although he had his own opinions and ideas, these opinions were valueless, as he was without means of giving effect to them. The greater part of the Tory party would support the Government whether its policy be black or white or any other colour; the bye-elections which from time to time showed how the wind was blowing were the most effective means of influencing Parliament on this question. The following is a copy of the memorandum :—

“IGNATIEFF.—The English people decided the Eastern Question in a Christian sense. I do not say the Government or Parliament or the wealthy classes, or the army or the greater part of the Metropolitan Press. Mais quant aux peuples, heart and soul revolted against the crimes and barbarities of the Porte. The *Times* will vote with the Government, black or white or both. Je ne m’y fie nullement le parti Liberal en énorme majorité souhaite une politique franche et ferme en faveur des Chrétiens je dirais volontiers des races sujettes. Government permitted free speech to Lord Salisbury, but to itself reserved the action, and at this moment I believe very little in concerted action. Ignorant of the Protocol. Diplomacy discredited by Conference at Constantinople failure. The Porte elated, the provinces crushed underfoot, etc. Voilà un compte rendu assez triste.”

March 21, 1878.

Mr. Freeman, writing on March 25, sent Madame Novikoff the following scrap of gossip about General Ignatieff’s visit to Hatfield.

“I see that you do not know any more than we do. George Withams, who was at Hatfield when Ignatieff was there, knows nothing save that he says

that Lord Salisbury is all our way. Wherefore then cleaveth he to the Jew? Certainly sending Elliott back is an insult to the human race. I know nothing like the calm brutality of his arithmetic. It does not matter whether 10,000 are massacred or 20,000.

“Do I infer that with you as with us here, what is called ‘Society’ is going wrong? I know very little about Society, and don’t want to know much more, as it seems to be a great brute and very idle and ignorant. I have sent you several scraps. The *Northern Echo* at Darlington (up in Durham) is the best paper in England—never wavering nor faltering. I wish it were the head paper in London, instead of that time-serving Jupiter.”

If I expose myself to the imputation of egoism in quoting these kind expressions, I do so, first, because it was these remarks which brought me the great boon of Madame Novikoff’s friendship, and secondly, because I was all these months acting under the direction and inspiration of Mr. Gladstone. The following letter, dated October 12, 1876, affords the reader a glimpse of the kind of encouragement and guidance a young journalist—I was only twenty-seven—editing the smallest of provincial newspapers—received in those days from the Liberal leader:—

“DEAR SIR,—It is quite out of my power to reply to your note in the manner which I could sincerely desire, on account of the thorough earnestness, as well as the great ability with which the *Northern Echo* has been fighting the battle of the Eastern Question.

“I am not able even to open the great bulk of the newspapers which come to me, and on this account I can hardly wish you to continue sending me yours, unless when it has something very special.

"It is hard to reply to your inquiry, for events change their face from day to day. You will observe that in the late expression of public opinion there has been one gap unfilled—there have been no County meetings—this is not unimportant.

"Were I in the place of editor of your paper I should take the following for my general clue. The Government have by their gross mismanagement, while pretending to bully Russia, and annoying her, thrown the whole game into her hands. She, with Austria and perhaps even without Austria, is now in a condition to do nearly what she pleases, and we cannot help it. England is placed in a degraded position. We have deluded the Turks with false expectations, failed in all our aims, pleased nobody, alienated the Christians, left them in peril of being swallowed up by Austria and Russia, a great improvement as compared with Turkey, but a great mischief as compared with their managing their own affairs.—Yours faithfully,

"W. E. GLADSTONE."

About this time Mr. Freeman began to be very anxious as to the need for dispelling the favourite Turkophile delusion that the country had changed its mind. The following was the type of many similar appeals that used to rain in upon me in those days:—

"*March 29, 1877.*

"I am sure that the nation should in some way speak its mind if it has a mind. The Turkish papers say that it has changed its mind since the autumn. I trust not, and, if I am right, the fact should be known that the enemy may no longer blaspheme. And to me privately the notion of holding peace because a negotiation is going on, seems the height of diplomatic cant, though I have no doubt that here I should have

official men of all sides against me. When the duty and honour of the nation are being sported away by the Jew, of all times in the world, the nation should speak out and say what it will have. That I am sure is in itself the right thing. But whether it is wise to attempt it depends on a thousand circumstances and opinions of which I am a very poor judge."

The Protocol was signed on March 31. It was a long and wordy document, the sting of which, if it had a sting, lay in the tail. After taking note of the Turks' promises, and remarking that if they were not fulfilled, "the Powers reserved to themselves the right to consider in common as to the means which they may deem best fitted to secure the well-being of the Christian population and the interests of the general peace." Lest any one should imagine that the Protocol committed any of the signatories to anything, Lord Derby appended a declaration that "the Protocol should be declared null and void in the event of the non-attainment of the proposed objects."

On April 7, Mr. Freeman wrote telling me of his intention to start for Greece on the 24th. The Prince of Montenegro, he says, has sent him a message. "If we *have* to make peace, you and your family will be heartily welcome." Upon which Mr. Freeman grimly observes, "I may be driven to hope that we may not be welcome." To one in this mood, it may be imagined the Protocol was hateful. He wrote to Madame Novikoff :—

"And now about the Protocol. We have now got the text. But what does it all mean? On our side—that is the Jew's side—it is plain enough. They

hail it as an escape from the necessity of doing anything. But how about your people? It is all 'if,' 'if,' 'if.' 'If the Turk does this.' Why, he is doing it all the time. Your troops might march at once for anything that the Protocol says. Derby's part in the business *seems* so transparently silly that one fancies that there must be some Jew trick behind that one does not see."

Madame Novikoff waxed impatient over Mr. Gladstone's silence. She wrote on April 18 :—

"I have not heard from you for ages, and regret it very much. Of course I have no claim upon your kind remembrances. You already know that Russia is not checked by Lord Beaconsfield's determination to defend his beloved Turks, and she is not afraid to make new terrible sacrifices. In six days, 24/12 April, war will be declared. The Emperor goes to Kishineff to-morrow, the declaration of war will be sent from there. You cannot conceive the agony through which we lived in during all this useless diplomatic twaddle, which only lost time and tried one's patience. But our Emperor has resumed his noble position, and all our hearts are with his generous determination. England prevents Greece from joining the insurrection, but we of course expected that.

"What will the Opposition do now since peace is no more to be thought of? Can you explain why the Liberal Party showed so little resistance in both Houses? I am sure there must have been some reason for it which we foreigners fail to understand.

"Do write me a few lines. If in free England people cannot correspond without being calumniated in the most vulgar way, England evidently is degener-

ating. Pardon my speaking so rudely. Best remembrances to Mrs. Gladstone.—Yours most truly,

“OLGA N.”

On April 23, Mr. Gladstone confided to Madame Novikoff his disappointment at the comparative failure of his pamphlet *Lessons in Massacre*. He replied to her letters complaining of his silence :—

“In truth I had been waiting to hear from you. About six weeks ago I published a pamphlet containing what I thought a very formidable indictment against the Turkish Government. I sent a copy immediately to you. After a fortnight or thereabouts I sent another, for I felt assured you would notice it, the argument really being important. From your note I infer that neither of them have reached you, why I cannot conceive. I enclose herewith a copy of the small popular edition. The accusation is conveyed in the few opening lines, and the proof is, I believe, as complete as it is horrible.

“I must add that it has produced no great public impression, the sale not yet beyond 6000 or 7000 copies, and I have not heard of its being translated.

“I told you that we should have to look to the local elections, occurring from time to time, as the best indication of English sentiment. About five of them in succession fully confirmed my belief that the people of England are almost (what is called) anti-Turkish. Last week the spell was broken by the adverse verdict in the large town of Salford. The contest was extremely close, and it by no means disproves my opinion, but it is one piece of testimony which fails to support it. Lord Salisbury appears to be trodden underfoot, and the Cabinet to do all it can for the Turk. The sentiment of the upper class

is very bad. The gain we still have from the proceedings in the autumn is that the Government dare not longer profess that they have nothing to do with the state of the Christian Rayahs of Turkey ; and that all idea of their going to war avowedly for Turkey is out of the question, though I fear some would wish it.

“ You may remember my warning you that it would not do to neglect the charges about Russian proceedings in Poland, and expressing an opinion that if Russia cared about the public sentiment of this country she would take measures for stating her views and case through the Press. The Government have now printed papers on the proceedings in Poland, a contemptible proceeding in my opinion, but not the less effective on that account. (Contemptible because we do not always publish our own misdeeds.) The Turks perfectly understand the importance of working through the Press.

“ With regard to Parliament many strong reasons have combined to keep the Liberal Party silent on the main issue. For example, the intentions of Russia were not known ; and I for one have had much fear of the effect abroad which a very adverse division might produce in favour of the Turks. *Now* the position is changing and clearing. Many do not believe that Russia will go to war. For my own part I expect it ; and I shall be deeply grieved and shamed if Europe leaves the matter to be settled between her and Turkey. The Greeks of Turkey have behaved extremely ill.”

Before Mr. Gladstone's letters reached Madame Novikoff on April 24, war was declared by Russia, and by nightfall 50,000 Russian troops had crossed the Roumanian frontier on the way to Bulgaria.

The following letters from Madame Novikoff were the last she addressed to Mr. Gladstone before the declaration of war :—

“ *April 22/10, 1877.*

“ All our newspapers of to-day ascribe to England the three following plans :—1. To occupy Athens and Crete, preventing Greece by all means from rising and helping us. 2. Refusal to permit Russian vessels to pass Gibraltar. 3. And occupy Constantinople if Turkey gets too great a smashing. I confess I am at a loss. All this is tantamount to a declaration of war against Russia. I thought, and I assured my friends, that England was on the whole favourable to the Christians. I beseech you to get us a key to solve these mysteries, for who can explain things better than you ? Best remembrances to Mrs. Gladstone.”

“ *24/12 April 1877.*

“ The declaration of war was received here to-day at 2 p.m. At 5 p.m. the Moscow Douma assembled in the Hotel de Ville. Very great enthusiasm. The Douma at once offered a million of roubles and, 1000 beds for the wounded. Cries were heard from different directions, ‘ It is too little, far too little.’ Then it was decided to consider the sum as a simple beginning. The merchants came also together and the same thing was repeated ; also a voluntary donation of a million ; 160 ladies offered their services as Sisters of Charity ; 100 of them having already passed their examinations. Russia seems quite revived. What will England do ? I know what she would do if you were at the head of the Government. But as it is now—well, we’ll do our duty and let happen what may.—Yours sincerely,

“ OLGA N.”

PART III.



WILLIAM E. GLADSTONE.
Four times Prime Minister of Great Britain.

PART III.

1877-1878.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT WILL ENGLAND DO ?

THE question with which Madame Novikoff concluded her letter announcing the declaration of war came home to Mr. Gladstone, as indeed it came home to all Englishmen. We had insisted upon having equal responsibilities with Russia in the settlement of the Eastern Question. We had associated ourselves with her in framing the programme of reforms drawn up at the Constantinople Conference, which the Turks had summarily rejected. We had signed the Protocol with Russia which offered the Turks a golden bridge by which they might have escaped both from the danger of war and the necessity for making reforms. That also the Turks had rejected without ceremony. What would England do ?

The answer to that question was that England would do nothing. We had bidden the Sultan reform, but as he refused to do our bidding, then with honest Dogberry we washed our hands of the whole business, thanking God we were rid of a knave. This decision was arrived at without any hesitation by the Government and the majority of the nation. It was a selfish,

short-sighted policy, an ignoble policy. But the section of the English which was not selfish or ignoble, which recognised its responsibilities, and was prepared to make whatever sacrifices were needed to meet its obligations, was in a minority. It could not command the support even of the leaders of the Liberal party.

No national humiliation was more keenly felt by the helpless minority or more complacently accepted by the omnipotent majority. If we had gone hand in hand with Russia, there would either have been no Turkish resistance, or it would have been disposed of in a month. In the interest of the Turks themselves concerted coercion was to be desired for the same reason that it is better that a dentist should have a wrist strong enough to remove an aching tooth by one quick wrench rather than to have a weakling who can pull it out only after a long series of painful jerks. For the Bulgarians, whom a joint-coercion policy would have delivered without making their country a cockpit of war for the Russians, for the principle of the European Concert, for humanity and for civilisation, our duty was clear.

But we shirked our duty. Lord Beaconsfield hoped against hope that the Turks might prove victorious. A large section of the nation disliked Russia, and did not wish to prevent her breaking her teeth upon Turkey. But the dominating influence was sheer unadulterated selfishness. Why should we fire a shot or spend a penny for the Bulgarians? If the Russians like to fight the Turk on their behalf, let them fight to their hearts' content. But as for us, we shall be neutral.

That was the deliberate decision of men like Mr. Forster and Mr. Bright. The latter was opposed to war under all circumstances; the former could

not see that it was our duty to go to war with Turkey, and believed, therefore, that it was our duty to abstain from going to war. Against so shameful an abdication of the position which we had fought the Crimean War in order to secure, Mr. Gladstone's soul rose in indignation and wrath. But, although he was supported by the Radicals and the stalwart coercionists of the atrocity campaign, he was powerless to rally even his own party in favour of the joint coercion of the Turks. The nation was practically solid in favour of leaving the Turks to their fate. The masses had not been educated up to a conception of international responsibilities which ought to be executed by international force.

The Cabinet, hopelessly divided when it was a question of action in either direction, could at least agree to do nothing. The policy was cheap, it was popular, and it was safe. As for the Ministerialists, the Rev. W. Denton accurately described their attitude when he wrote to Madame Novikoff on March 31 as follows :—

“The Conservative Members of the House of Commons are so well drilled to obey—your old serfs could be hardly more submissive—that, with the exception of Mr. Forsyth, none move a finger, though many disapprove of the policy of our Ministry. I see no signs of any life such as I and others desire to see. What we have done—and that we *have* done—is to make war with Russia in defence of the Turk out of the question; as to any active coercion of the Turk, another massacre, alas! must take place before we arrive at that determination, and that massacre will take place sooner or later.”

The Liberals were more hopeful, but it is doubtful

whether there were at any time more than 60 or 70 avowed Coercionists in a House of 658.

Under those circumstances Mr. Gladstone's position was exceedingly difficult. Popular agitation in favour of not helping the Turks was easy. Public meetings in favour of joining the Russians in coercing the Turks were more difficult to command. Even Mr. Freeman, who was all for coercing the Turk, always made the point of his appeal to the public that we should not be dragged into war against Russia.

Writing to me two days before the declaration of war, as he was starting for his journey to Greece, Mr. Freeman said :—

“ I am sure that the time has come for more meetings, or for strong action of some kind. How much the meetings of last year, winding up with St. James's Hall, really told, is plain from the way in which they still rankle in the Tory mind. Their boast that the nation has changed its mind should be answered. The great point of all is to speak out that in no case will we let the Jew drag us into a war with Russia. It has doubtless been his policy all along to let Russia go to war with the Turk, and then to pick some quarrel with her. I don't suppose he tells this either to Lord Derby, who is too stupid, or to Lord Salisbury, who is too honest ; but that is clearly his own game. And we must speak against it in time. You Northerners should begin.”

Writing from Verona, April 30, to Madame Novikoff, Mr. Freeman said :—

“ I am here on my way to Greece with two daughters, Margaret and Helen. We heard of the

beginning of the war just before we left England. You need not ask where my sympathies lie ; but I fear that many are turning back in England. It is wonderful how the 'Russian Bugbear' tells. I fear even the *Daily News* is waning a little.

"These stories about the treatment of the Uniats are doing a great deal of mischief in England. The line is to say that they are as bad as the Bulgarian doings, and that Russians and Turks are equally bad. I know nothing of the truth of the stories, but, if one believes the very worst version, there is still no parallel between the two cases. This was well put in an article in the *Guardian* last Wednesday. I think I sent you one from my good little friend, *Northern Echo*, with a very good analogy. English feeling for the Protestant case in the Netherlands was not the less genuine in Elizabeth's day because both Roman Catholics and Protestant Nonconformists were then persecuted in England.

"I see that people have the vaguest notion who the Uniats are, just as they have the vaguest notion of the old boundaries of Russia, Poland, and Lithuania. It could not be a bad thing if you can anyhow enlighten English people on these matters. The Greeks, too, seem dreadfully afraid that Russia will sacrifice them to the Bulgarians. I tell them that I hope they will not ask me to draw the boundary in Macedonia and Thrace. If I did, I should make enemies of two sets of people both of whom I wish to keep as friends. But if Epeiros, Thessaly, and Crete rise, the Greeks of the kingdom must stir."

At a later date Mr. Freeman again referred to the subject:—

"I could not understand any reason for that

Russian blue book, save the Jew's longing to make mischief in every form. I hope the stories are lies. But suppose them true. What then? Russia and England are independent Powers, each standing on its own legs. Each must see to its own sins. Neither is a judge of the other. Neither is 'upheld' by a third Power 'for its own interests.' But the Turk is not independent, he does not stand on his own legs; he is 'upheld' by England, and other Powers, 'for their own interests.' These Powers, therefore, have a right to judge him; otherwise, his sins are theirs. To publish a Russian blue book is therefore in no sense any answer to the Turkish blue book. It is a piece of the Jew's insolence, like everything else."

The question of the Uniat Greeks need not detain us here, although in 1877 the Tory papers wrote much on the subject. The Government, by way of doing an unfriendly turn to Russia, had published a Blue Book full of dispatches from Mansfield, British Consul in Poland, describing the cruelties to which the Uniat Greeks were subjected by the Russian authorities in order to compel them to return to the Orthodox Church. It was a sore subject with Madame Novikoff. On May 2 she wrote to Mr. Gladstone from Moscow:—

"Concerning the Uniat Greeks, Mansfield and his wife are entirely in Polish hands. Believe me, proselytism is not at all in our nature. It is perfectly wonderful how often English diplomatists are misled in their judgment. I'll give you an extract from a letter which reached me at this moment: 'L'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre est furieux de la marche des Affaires pretendant qu'il a ete trompé par les Russes et qu'il a

assuré tout le temps son gouvernement qu'il n'y avait qu'un très petit (!!!) parti qui croyent l'honneur national en jeu. Le bon vieux Leflô (Ambassadeur de France) lui a nettement parlé l'autre jour "Plaiguez vous encore quand c'est uniquement grâce à vos recits mensongers (!) que nous devons la guerre ! Oui je maintiens mon dire, nous avez donné sur eux de fausses informations." Le 9 Avril Leflô reçoit un télégramme de Paris du Duc Decazes, "Vous êtes trop alarmistes, vous et vos rapports. La guerre est impossible. Personne ne veut la guerre. Je pars pour Nice." "Eh bien," repond Leflô, "j'aurai le plaisir de vous en faire revenir dans trois jours." La guerre fut déclarée le 12/24 Avril.'

"The enthusiasm is intense. The donations so numerous and spontaneous that even Russians scarcely believe their own eyes. No description can give you an idea of what is going on here since war was declared. How blind some people have been these last months ! I think I always told you that every day of peace was a day of agony as long as nothing serious was secured for the Slavs.

"Do write to me, dear Mr. Gladstone, if you can do so without exposing yourself to some danger. In free England there is a kind of slavery quite curious to Russians, and what they call 'the free proceedings of the Press' sometimes terribly low and vulgar. Pardon my speaking to you so frankly.—Yours ever in spite of the Press, OLGA N."

This letter elicited an immediate response. Mr. Gladstone was then in the throes of the fight with the leaders of his own party over his famous Resolutions in favour of the co-operative coercion of the Turks, which he had moved on May 7 :—

“ 73 HARLEY ST., May 8, 1877.

“ MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—Let me define the ‘slavery’ to which you refer in your interesting letter of the 2nd.

“ I am acting in the Eastern Question against the Government, the Clubs, the London Press (in majority), the majority of both Houses, and five-sixths or nine-tenths of the Plutocracy of the country. These make up a great Power. Against them is, I believe, the true nation. For and with the true nation I am striving to act. In so acting, I have, God knows, no strength to spare. It is my duty carefully to avoid whatever, even in a small degree, diminishes that strength. To write to you secretly, systematically, to furnish you with documents, or the like, would strengthen prejudices against me, and thus injure a cause very dear to me. Do not be surprised, therefore, if, as I begged off from sending you registered letters or in any way affecting secrecy, so I ask to be excused from sending you documents with which I have no natural concern, and in sending which I should therefore seem to do the business of an agent. We are in the midst of a serious debate and another serious movement. The proceedings have had reference to a notice of mine in Parliament, only given on April 30, and have therefore been hasty; but there have been a multitude of meetings with great enthusiasm. It is impossible after so short a view to compare them accurately with those of the autumn, but I think they markedly bear out my opinion, that the nation thinks now as *it thought then*.

“ I am overwhelmed with work. A private person in a private house, I had 140 letters on Saturday, and yesterday, I think, 250. My correspondence with the Russians has been charged in the Debate! I must

mention it in my reply. I have no time to enter on the general question. God save the right.—Yours sincerely,
W. E. GLADSTONE."

Before that letter had time to reach Moscow, Madame Novikoff had dashed off the following note of enthusiasm and of alarm. The report of his speech introducing his Resolutions had reached Moscow by telegraph the previous day:—

"You are fighting again a noble and grand battle in the history of the world. May God keep you and prosper your heroic efforts. Please do let me hear from you.—I am, yours ever gratefully,

"OLGA N."

The Stalwarts who desired to see the British fleet co-operating with the Russian armies were strong in the North and in some parts of the Midlands. But the idea of concerted coercion was too new and too distasteful to the ordinary Englishman for it to be accepted by the nation—especially after the war had actually begun. Before the declaration of war, on the day when the Turks rejected the Protocol, I published a reasoned appeal for concerted coercion. It was specially addressed to the non-interventionists, who, in their zeal for peace, refused to substitute the policeman for the soldier, and thereby ensured the continuance of war. This article brought me an interesting letter from Mr. Chamberlain, with whom at that time I was in frequent correspondence.

Mr. Chamberlain wrote on April 12 from the Alexandra Hotel, Hyde Park Corner, S.W. :—

"Speaking generally, I am quite in agreement with you on the matter, being convinced that Inter-

national Arbitration implies as a consequence International Police. I do not, however, entertain any hope of converting the peace-at-any-price party to this view. It must, however, be borne in mind that they are few in number and without real influence. The friends of peace are, I hope, the majority of the nation, but the friends of peace at any price may be counted almost on the fingers. The probable result of non-intervention in the present case will be that Russia will execute judgment on the Turks alone, and having done so, will be unable to refuse to her army and her people the reward which they will expect in the shape of increase of territory. Then we shall have a cry for English interference, and although I do not suppose the Government will be allowed to go to war against Russia, and although I am certain we should be powerless in such a struggle, yet the risk of some complication, in which our interests may be seriously involved, is very great. On the other hand, a willingness to have intervened at the proper time, and in concert with others to impose the decision of the Conference on the Turks would, I am convinced, have been followed by their immediate submission.

“ I hope you will continue, as opportunity permits, to advocate the views which you have so well expressed in your articles.”

When war broke out there was an angry demand on the part of the Stalwarts for parliamentary action. But outside the small Radical group Mr. Gladstone could find no parliamentary support. The following letter from Mr. Peter Rylands, M.P. for Warrington, written on April 27, just before the introduction of Mr. Gladstone's Resolutions, expresses the feeling of despair and disgust which prevailed in the Stalwart

camp at that time. Mr. Rylands wrote from the House of Commons :—

“ I have been most anxious to induce the front Opposition bench to propose a resolution regretting that, in consequence of the vacillating policy of the Government and their unwillingness to cordially co-operate with the other European Powers, they have failed either to secure the amelioration of the Christians of Turkey or to prevent war.

“ I drafted the resolution and gave it to Lord Hartington, but unfortunately the difference of opinion amongst the Opposition leaders and the great timidity of some of them, combined with the ‘ flabby ’ political condition of the rank and file of the Liberal party, prevented any action being taken to test the opinion of the House on a Vote of Want of Confidence.

“ I agree with you in the opinion that the Liberal party have signally failed in their duty this Session in relation to the Eastern Question, and I much fear that mistaken views of the Non-Intervention party have had a great deal to do with the divided counsels which have prevented any steps being taken.”

Mr. Gladstone having exhausted all means of persuasion upon the leaders of his party, decided upon independent action. On April 30 he gave notice of a string of five Resolutions, somewhat long-winded and obscure, the gist of which was a demand that Great Britain should take part in the coercion of Turkey. Instantly the Stalwarts sent round the fiery cross, and meetings were held in all the more advanced centres supporting Mr. Gladstone’s action and calling upon the Liberal leaders to support him. On May 4 I received a letter from Mr. Chamberlain :—

“The Liberal front bench have resolved to desert Mr. G., and it is of the utmost importance that he should receive cordial and general popular support. If the Whigs adhere to their present determination, a complete split in the party must result. I am not certain that this will be altogether a bad thing, since we might hope that it would be reformed upon some more solid basis.

“I am very glad to see accounts of meetings in your neighbourhood, and hope they will be multiplied during the next day or two.”

The Liberal leaders found themselves so embarrassed by the demonstrations in favour of Mr. Gladstone that they decided to compromise. Negotiations were set on foot to induce Mr. Gladstone to consent to a parliamentary manœuvre by which, without sacrificing his demand for concerted coercion, the whole party could be brought into the lobby in support of his first Resolution, which merely declared that the House had just cause for dissatisfaction and complaint at the way in which the Porte had treated Lord Derby's dispatch of September 21. Mr. Gladstone consented. When the discussion was about to open, he was asked if he intended to divide on all his Resolutions. He said No; the usual form was to take a vote on the first. A confused wrangle of two hours followed, after which Mr. Gladstone made what Mr. Balfour has since declared was one of the greatest speeches ever delivered in the House. The effect of the parliamentary manœuvre was not understood in the country.

“Gladstone's run away! Whom can we trust?” was the significant message dashed off by James Annand, then editing the *Newcastle Chronicle*.

Mr. Gladstone always denied that he had abandoned

any of his Resolutions. Here is Mr. Chamberlain's explanation of what happened, written on May 8, the morning after the debate:—

“ Gladstone has been, I am afraid, betrayed by his recent colleagues. As far as I can understand, he was asked whether he intended to have all his Resolutions put from the chair. Upon his reply that he had never had such intention, he was begged to make this statement in the House, and was told that by doing so he would reunite the party. The real fact being that the Hartington set wanted an excuse to retrieve their false step; but having got Gladstone's pledge, they at once spread a rumour about the lobbies that Gladstone had completely ‘caved in’ to them. Hence, intense excitement on the part of those who had shared in and approved the public agitation of the last few days, and who felt, if there had really been any change in Gladstone's tactics, that the country, which had risen to his call, had been betrayed.

“ I do not myself believe that any such change has taken place, although the friends of Lord Hartington, by endeavouring to make it appear so, have inflicted another serious blow on the party, whose dignity was certainly much compromised by such a scene as that which took place last night.”

It is easy to criticise Mr. Gladstone, and to say that the astuteness of the old parliamentary hand got the better of the instincts of the popular leader. He could not have carried his Resolutions anyhow. If he had split his party he would have strengthened the advocates of war. Thanks to his acquiescence in the manœuvre of the leaders, he took 223 members into the lobby for his first Resolution against 354 who supported the Government. But for the manœuvre

he would not have carried with him half the Liberal party.

Nevertheless his tactics confused and mortified many of those who had been his stoutest supporters. The following letter from Bishop Fraser of Manchester, dated May 11, expressed the general feeling of the best Gladstonians in the north :—

“ I deeply feel the momentousness of the crisis, and profoundly regret the threatened split in the Liberal party. I can hardly conceive the nation, in a sane moment, going to war in behalf of Turkey ; but really the spirit of blindness seems to have come over a large and influential section of society—I know not with what motives or designs—that may make anything possible.

“ At the same time, I confess I do not clearly see the direct aim of Mr. Gladstone’s policy ; and abstract Resolutions are always of questionable expediency. The saddest feature in the case, to my mind, is that humane feelings are being laughed to scorn as, at best, an amiable but embarrassing weakness. You see this in the discussion of the Vivisection question, as well as in this Eastern affair. One knows from history how often a so-called epoch of high civilisation has been almost brutally indifferent to suffering.”

To remove the dissatisfaction and to give a fresh lead to the Stalwarts, Mr. Chamberlain invited Mr. Gladstone to go down to Bingley Hall, Birmingham, and inaugurate the National Liberal Federation. What Mr. Chamberlain was aiming at was not disguised. He wrote me on May 24 :—

“ If you want the keynote to the approaching demonstration, which will be one of the most important

and striking that has ever been held, you will find it in this, that it is a demonstration by the party of action amongst the Liberals in favour of more definite objects, and in support of the man who, more than any other at the present time, represents a policy of action, both abroad and at home.

“The future programme of Liberalism must come from below. It is evident we have no inspiration to expect from our present official leaders; and I hope that a result of the present movement will be to secure some greater unity of action, and to give force and clearness to Liberal opinion.”

Madame Novikoff at Moscow watched with anxiety the fortunes of Mr. Gladstone's Resolutions. The debate ended on May 14. Mr. Freeman had by this time made his way to Athens, from whence he wrote to Madame Novikoff on May 27 :—

“This nation here cannot make up its mind, nor do I wonder at it. It will gain nothing without stirring, and it is afraid to stir lest Hobart should come and burn up the coast towns. You see that their risk is far greater than that of any of the inland people. They are dreadfully afraid of Russia, thinking that you will do everything for the Bulgarians and nothing for them.

“Seriously, I think a few friendly assurances given by Russia to Greece would do good. Popular feeling strikes me as getting warlike, and bands are crossing into Thessaly. But what the statesmen want is some assurance that they will not be left to cope unaided with the Turkish fleet. Your fleet has enough to do. Could Austria (which seems inclined to act in Bosnia) or Italy be got to do anything?”

On May 29, Canon Liddon wrote Madame Novikoff

from Oxford a long letter giving his view of the situation. It is characterised by his quiet, thoroughgoing advocacy of Russia, which, in his eyes, was heroically bearing upon her own shoulders the burden of a new crusade :—

“ Since the debate in Parliament on Mr. Gladstone’s Resolution, the Turcophile demand for war with Russia has been comparatively silent. Of course the Turkish newspapers, the *Pall Mall*, *Daily Telegraph*, and *Morning Post*, have gone on as before. But *neutral people* have been, so far as my observation goes, much less inclined to listen to them. And those who think that a war with Russia, under such circumstances, would be nothing less than *a gigantic crime* on the part of England, have had the courage to speak out, more and more decisively, both in the press and in society.

“ Last Sunday I had an opportunity of referring to the subject in preaching before the University of Oxford. And what I said was well received, as I have since learned.

“ Certainly, so long as Lord Beaconsfield is Prime Minister, we are not safe. His one positive passion is that of upholding Asiatics against Europeans—non-Christian Asiatics against Christian Europeans. But his Cabinet is by no means united ; and I hope and believe that there are ministers who will keep their chief in check, as they have hitherto kept him.

“ Pray do assure your friends in Moscow that there are numbers of Englishmen who thank God for the success of the arms of Russia, who rejoice at the prospect of deliverance for the Armenian and Bulgarian Christians, and who utterly reject the nonsense which is talked by some of our newspapers about danger to our Indian Empire.

“ Mr. Gladstone is going to address 30,000 people at Birmingham on Thursday on the Eastern Question. There will be special trains ; and, I hope, a great popular demonstration in favour of the cause of righteousness, which is also the cause of Russia.”

The meeting was duly held. It was a magnificent success. Madame Novikoff wrote to Mr. Gladstone, June 2 :—

“ Accept my heartiest congratulations for your Birmingham triumphs and my heartiest thanks for your pamphlet, which reached me at last after a long delay.—Yours in haste, but sincerely. Best love to Mrs. G. OLGA NOVIKOFF, *NÉE* KIRÉEFF.”

CHAPTER II.

DURING THE WAR.

ENGLAND, then, would do nothing. Mr. Gladstone's eloquence, backed by Mr. Chamberlain's organisation and north-country enthusiasm, could not do more than secure the neutrality of the Government. So long as Egypt, the Suez Canal, and Constantinople were not attacked, the English Government would maintain an attitude of strict neutrality. The fact that Russia was fighting to achieve ends which the British Government had declared to be just counted for nothing. The Prime Minister and a small minority in the country would have liked to have assisted the Turks in resisting the demands which our own Government had made at the Constantinople Conference and in the Protocol. Mr. Gladstone and a large minority in the country would have joined hands in compelling the Turk to yield to the demands of Europe. But the majority of the people, imperfectly educated as to the moral obligations imposed by the Treaty of Paris, without sufficient imagination to realise the importance of co-operating in the evolution of the international world state, and lacking the ethical sense of their duty as members of the United States of Europe, preferred to stand apart—leaving Russians and Turks to fight it out. The Gladstonians, in the midst of their chagrin at their inability to stop the war by

coercing the Turk, had at least the consolation of knowing they had rendered it impossible for Lord Beaconsfield to take up arms against Russia on behalf of the Turks.

When the war began, no one more heartily prayed for the success of the Russian arms than the earnest and energetic men who had responded to the appeal of Mr. Gladstone. The Russian cause was to them a holy cause. "The Divine Figure from the North," the great White Tsar, all these expressions of hyperbole, which caused the enemy to blaspheme, were seen to be natural and right by millions in England for the first time. These Russians were going forth to die for the cause of Justice and of Right. Every Russian victory was acclaimed with enthusiasm and every Russian reverse passionately resented as if it were an outrage upon our sense of justice. Russia was not formally but in fact the mandatory of humanity. She was the standard-bearer of civilisation, and her progress was watched in many an English home with as much genuine admiration and passionate sympathy as if Alexander the Second had been another St. Louis setting forth to deliver the Holy Sepulchre from the infidel hordes.

Madame Novikoff wrote to Mr. Gladstone three days after Mr. Cross had defined the conditions of British neutrality in the House of Commons:—

"German and French papers assume that the neutrality of England is not to be trusted, and that very large sums (from the Indian Budget) are already given to the Turks. It seems, likewise, that Crete will be taken by England."

The neutrality of England was of a very curious kind. As Madame Novikoff sarcastically remarked:—

“The first shell fired on the Danube into the Russian ranks was fired by the English Admiral from an English gun, as he swept on an English-built gunboat down the river to the sea, amid the enthusiastic applause of the English Press.”

The position of Hobart Pasha in command of the Turkish fleet, using it to attack Russian coast towns and to compel the Greeks to refrain from seizing Thessaly and Epirus, was a subject of constant irritation. The Stalwarts were always demanding his punishment as an offender against the Proclamation of Neutrality, but demanding it in vain! Hobart's case did not stand alone. As Madame Novikoff once bitterly observed :—

“The Turks had volunteers in plenty from England—Her Majesty's proclamation notwithstanding. You sent an Admiral to command the Turkish ironclads and a General from—penance to command a Turkish army. There were others also, but again there was a difference. Our volunteers sacrificed everything—home, family, friends, country, life itself—in order to free their brethren, and one-third fell on Servian soil. Your volunteers, less idealistic and more practical, sold their services for gold, and all of them seem to have succeeded pretty well in preserving their precious skins.”

The Turkish army contained the following British officers on half-pay: two colonels, three majors, seven captains, and an adjutant—most of whom, in flagrant defiance of the Proclamation of Neutrality, took an active part in resisting the Russian advance.

Nor was this all by any means. A proclamation was issued addressed to Greek insurgents by two

British consuls, Blunt and Merlin, which described Russia as "the great and common enemy of yourselves and Europe," and promising that England will see to their rights "after the enemy has been driven from your country."

It is not very wonderful, with such facts before them, that the Russians regarded the so-called British neutrality as a mere mask concealing an enmity which merely bided its time.

The Russian armies were at last in motion.

On May 17 General Loris Melikoff captured Ardahan.

The Danube was crossed on June 27-28 at Slimnitza, and for a time all went well. General Gourko by a rapid and daring march occupied Yeni Saghra, his advance guard being everywhere hailed with rapturous enthusiasm by the Bulgarians. Already eager hearts in England and in Russia were hoping for the speedy collapse of the Turkish power, pierced to the heart by the sudden thrust of the Russian sword.

And then, ah, then a change came o'er the spirit of the dream. The Russian armies in Europe and in Asia, instead of being invariably triumphant, began to suffer reverse after reverse. Osman Pasha recaptured Plevna on July 18, and at once set to work to throw up earthworks, behind which the Turks were able to withstand the repeated assaults of the Russian army until December. General Gourko had to evacuate the South Balkan valleys, and the Russians were hard put to it to hold the Shipka Pass. Their stubborn valour, however, prevailed. The Turks, who had inflicted a terrible vengeance on the villagers who had acclaimed their Russian deliverers, were unable to dislodge the Russians from the Pass. On

July 31 the Russians attacked Plevna under General Krudener, and were repulsed with the loss of 5000 men. The war remained hung up, as it were, both in Asia and in Europe for the rest of the summer.

Mr. Freeman, who was spending the summer in Greece, writing on June 26 to Madame Novikoff, says :—

“ June 26, 1877.

“ No, I have not had a letter from the Queen of the Greeks. But I did have a talk with the King. I never talked to a king before, and I was a little amazed to find he talked so like another man. That is to say, he talked so much more freely about the state of things than I should have expected.

“ We had a delightful time in Greece. I never was made so much of before. We had gunboats and everything to take us about, and in the islands I was led about by enthusiastic crowds, and had to make speeches to them, just like an English election. I had no idea I could make Greek speeches, but I managed somehow, by a little jumble of old and new.

“ But among my Greeks I did not forget my Slavs. I always added some such phrase as ‘ The Greeks, and the other Christian nations of the East.’ Greek feeling is very bitter against Russia ; not at all against Serbia or Montenegro, but against Russia and Bulgaria. They expect that Russia will draw a frontier unfavourable to them. I tell them that, if so, they should establish a claim on Russia by vigorous action of their own. But a kind word or so from your side would do good.”

But amid all his holiday-making in the East Mr. Freeman never lost sight of the battlefield at

home. Here, for instance, is the summons he sent off to me on July 16:—

“Cry aloud and spare not. The battle is very largely between England and London—that is, what calls itself London: ‘Society,’ and all that—all that reaches its climax at Stafford House. The people must be kept up to the same work this autumn which they did last autumn, otherwise the Jew may plunge us into nobody knows what as soon as Parliament rises. You in the North must take the lead, as your forefathers did in the days of the Great Charter. I believe we are just as sound at this end—witness Gladstone’s reception both in January and now—but you have rare pluck to start things. So pray blow the trumpet in the Bishopric. I will add, ‘Let the Hebrews hear,’ not in King Saul’s sense, but in one in which the Hebrews may hear and tremble. There seems, however, some chance of the Arch-Deceiver’s reign coming to an end before long, in one way or another. So at least I heard in London.”

The moment the Russians crossed the Turkish frontier the pro-Turkish Press, with Sir A. H. Layard, the British Ambassador, leading them on, started an outcry against “Russian atrocities.” Mr. Freeman, writing to Madame Novikoff on July 21, said:—

“I suppose the Cossacks have done some ugly things, as English troops did at St. Sebastian, French in Algeria, and generally everybody everywhere. I don’t know this from the Turkish lies, but from what the *Times*’ correspondent telegraphs. The point is this. The doers of the Turkish doings were promoted and decorated; the Turkish officers who behaved

well were punished. I assume that a Russian court-martial will do the exact contrary; but I want to be assured as soon as possible that it has done so.

“Otherwise, things seem going on gloriously. I wanted to stay here steadily for months to come, but if St. Sophia is to be rechristened before the end of the year, I must start again, and must ask you to get me a ticket.”

August came. Parliament was prorogued on August 14, with pacific assurances in the Queen's Speech. Seven days later began the prolonged struggle for the retention of the Shipka Pass which lasted till September 20.

During the period lasting from the end of August till the middle of November, when the Russian arms were unsuccessful both in Europe and in Asia, the pro-Turkish Press kept up a persistent mitraille of accusations against the Russian troops. That the Russians behaved throughout with singular humanity and self-control was subsequently admitted by almost all the war correspondents at the front. But the Turks, remembering how they had been injured by the reports of their atrocities in Bulgaria in 1876, seemed to have conceived the idea that the one thing needful to secure their victory was to bring charges of atrocities against the Russians. To these Turkish charges Madame Novikoff refused to pay the compliment of making any reply.

Mr. Gladstone, who had frequently chafed at the indifference displayed by the Russians to the calumnies of their libellers, felt himself bound to refer publicly to the allegations brought against the Russians on the score of inhumanity. Hence two

letters from him to Madame Novikoff in August, evidently written in reply to her remonstrances on this subject:—

“August 3, 1877.

“MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—If you were able to see the English papers, you would learn all, and from some of them much more than all, that I could tell you about myself. The Question of the East, which is an agony for Russia, continues to be for us an anxiety. It is all very well to talk about neutrality, but having, as I think, dishonourably declined to fulfil our duty on the right side, we feel a continual danger of slipping into the contest on the wrong one. The contest in the Cabinet manifestly continues, and by movements outside the rational part has been enabled to prevent the Turkish part from any real step in that direction, and has given us pacific assurances, while the other side is paid off with the ridiculous manner of strengthening the garrison of Malta.

“Your free comments on English policy do not annoy me ; it is good for us, and helps us to see ourselves if we know how others see us. We require such comments much : it is a pity that our newspapers are not fond of printing them, unless in cases where they are so exaggerated as to be obviously ridiculous. I think that, as between nations, *honest* free-speaking and no reserve is good for all parties. I have just been practising upon my own country in an article upon Borneo, following up a speech in the House of Commons, and again in one on Egypt. Both of them I hope to be able to send you shortly. In the latter one I have spoken of the outrages imputed to Russians and Bulgarians. These allegations form a very serious chapter in the affair. Russia is, of course,

entitled to judge how far it is worth her while to discuss and, the facts permitting, to confute them. But it will be very difficult—unless where false they are confuted, and where true efficaciously punished—to prevent their misleading seriously a large part of the public here—misleading them into wholesale acceptance. Though the Turkish Government lies professionally and wholesale, yet as a Government it is entitled to an answer; and though its assertions are so multiplied and so vague that full answering is not always possible, yet in some cases it is possible; and I earnestly hope attention will be paid to this matter, for it is grave. This I have written to Count Schouvaloff and to Lord Derby, and also in print towards the close of my article on Egypt. Perhaps you remember what I told you about the *Black Book* on Poland. As the success of Germany turned the English mind towards the side of France, so a long unbroken success of Russia will have some amount of similar influence on the less reasoning among the people. But I am very sorry to see that there appear to have been serious reverses following the attack on Plevna, for all reasonable men ought to desire that you may force Turkey to a good and early peace. I am not surprised at the words ascribed to C. Villiers. He is, on this question, I believe, a thorough partisan. It is a very different mind from that of his brother, Lord Clarendon, whom we lost in 1870. As connected with the state of feeling here, it may interest you to know that the local elections continue to show a change of feeling unfavourable to the Government. It has been so in every case for the last twelve months, except one or two which can be accounted for on special grounds. But this is a slow operation.—Believe me sincerely yours, W. E. GLADSTONE.”

"HAWARDEN, *August 24, 1877.*

"MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—I am not sure what letter of mine has caused you the distress mentioned in yours of the 26th ult. which reached me to-day. If it is the one enclosed herewith,¹ then I do not know why it should have had such an effect. If you were in this country you would better be able to comprehend what is going on here. You remember my warning you of the effect which the accounts of outrages in Poland would produce unless they were answered and confuted. That effect has now been produced. Doubtless it is due in part to selfishness, which uses misdeeds of Russians, real or supposed, as its pretext. But at present the tide runs high in that direction among the portion of the community who are leaned that way—namely, the upper class, the army, and the Tories. I am compelled to be very careful in what I say, and with our people I am the subject of incessant abuse, as a thick-and-thin supporter of Russia. I send you an article of mine on Egypt. Pray read

¹ Copy of newspaper cutting enclosed with foregoing letter :—

Mr. Gladstone on the Atrocities.

"*August 24, 1877.*

"To a correspondent who had asked Mr. Gladstone to let his voice be heard on the atrocities charged to the Russians as he had formerly done with respect to those alleged against the Turks, the right hon. gentleman replied, under date August 10 : 'Sir, I feel that your letter is conceived in the spirit of justice as well as of humanity. We have in these cases to ascertain, first, that the events have really occurred ; and, secondly, who were the doers. The people of this country remained quiet last year about the Bulgarian atrocities until both were ascertained. This is not, so far as I know, the case at present. The shameless, wholesale lying of the Turkish Government deprives its allegations of all claim to value. There is, however, I think, evidence enough of many cruel and horrible deeds. I myself should be most thankful to any one who would give me the means of judging whether they were due to Russians or to Bulgarians.—Yours faithfully,

W. E. GLADSTONE.' "

the last pages. It went to press about July 23. Since then we have had ample evidence (1) that the Turks have been at their old abominable practices; (2) that great cruelties have been committed upon Mussulman women and children in certain cases. That is supported, up to a certain point, by evidence that leaves no room for doubt. My duty is to proceed with a perfect impartiality. I think we now know that the armed Bulgarians have been doing cruel and horrible acts. Some of the wounds are lance wounds, and they say Bulgarians do not carry lances. It would be strange, amidst all the circumstances, if nobody in the Russian army had shared in their outrages. We cannot take all soldiers to be angels. At the same time, cruelty is *worse* in a Christian than in a Turk. What I want to hear of is severe and prompt punishment of some offenders, if they can be detected. I am bound to say the evidence here is in favour of the generally humane conduct of the Russians. If you think you have cause to care about English opinion, your people should (as the Turks do) supply the English Press with good and true information. May God in His mercy lead all these great events to good issues.—Yours sincerely,

“ W. E. GLADSTONE.”

Mr. Freeman, being in a position of greater freedom and less responsibility, did not trouble Madame Novikoff with reflections concerning Turkish allegations against Russian soldiers, which irritated her much as the German accusations against British soldiers in the Boer War irritated the English. Writing on August 20, Mr. Freeman said :—

“ There are some people, with Lord Stratheden

at their head, who want to go about and hold meetings against Russia. I cannot fancy that they will take much by it, and I hope we may get some advantage out of them. I suppose the Government really mean neutrality—that is, the Jew and his fire-eaters are out-voted in the Cabinet, but of course he will play any trick that he can. And of course, if we can keep them to neutrality, it is all that is to be hoped for from them, though I and many others do not understand neutrality between Christ and Belial. My Northern friend has blown a great blast on this head, which I hope you will get along with this.

“We are all mourning about Plevna. We don’t doubt that it will be set straight again ; but it is a frightful loss of time, men, and energy, and, worst of all, the people south of Balkans are left to barbarians. I don’t profess to understand military matters, but there must surely be some bad generalship somewhere.”

It was just after the second reverse suffered by the Russians before Plevna that Mr. Freeman first mentioned Madame Novikoff to me. He wrote :—

“ *September 9, 1877.*

“I send you about to divers parts of Europe. Here is how you strike a Russian lady, well up in politics. Only keep her letter private :—

“ *August 24, 1877.*

“ ‘The more I read the *Northern Echo*, the more I admire it. Can you tell me the name of the Editor? I should greatly like to make his acquaintance. What a capital article you sent me in *Northern Echo*.

“ ‘OLGA NOVIKOFF.’ ”

It may not be without interest to quote briefly from the first letter I ever received from Madame

Novikoff, and not less briefly from my reply. Writing from Lake Como on September 11, Madame Novikoff said :—

“ Russia and England, for their common interests, should go hand in hand, having the same grand mission in Asia. But your statesmen and writers are so afraid of being thought partial, and so seldom dare to say an honest word, that one really admires the few exceptions to that general rule. Mr. Freeman, the Duke of Argyle, Mr. Gladstone, have done more to appease our indignation than all the threats of your Prime Minister and his base, sneering, and calumniating party. . . . An honest declaration of war could do less harm to our *entente cordiale* than the mean vulgarity and injustice characterising English debates and articles.

“ I hope to be in London (Symonds’s Hotel, Brook Street) about the middle of October. It would be a real pleasure to me to make your acquaintance, somehow or other. Your efforts to serve the truth are courageous and wise.”

Replying on October 2, I wrote to Madame Novikoff :—

“ As an Englishman, I have a debt to pay to every Russian with whom I may be brought into contact—a debt, alas ! which I can never adequately repay, for nothing I can do can atone for the frightful miseries occasioned to Russia by the policy of the English Government. Throughout the darkness of these autumn nights I seem to hear the wail of the widow, the lamentation of the bereaved mother far away in the villages of Russia, weeping in solitude for the brave ones who will return no more for ever. And

to you, Madame, as the only Russian woman whom I can address, I express the shame and sorrow with which I contemplate the results of Beaconsfield's handiwork."

These two extracts sound the note of a friendship which, beginning in 1877, has continued unbroken to this day.

An old friend of mine, Sir T. Wemyss Reid, made the following reference to this subject in his *Memoirs* :—

" It was at this time that he (W. T. Stead) fell under the influence of Madame Novikoff, who, whether accredited or unaccredited, was generally regarded as the unofficial representative of Russia in this country. She was and is a lady of great talent and plausibility, and she undoubtedly exercised at one time an extraordinary amount of influence over many distinguished politicians. I am not prepared to say that Stead took his inspiration upon Russian politics solely from Madame Novikoff, but at any rate he never wrote anything in the *Northern Echo* in those days of which that lady could not heartily approve; and thus he made another powerful and enthusiastic friend in the political society of our time."¹

It is as well that Sir T. Wemyss Reid was "not prepared to" make an assertion which can be disproved by a mere reference to dates.

Having been for ten years an eager advocate of an Anglo-Russian *entente*, and for two years on the war-path against Turkish misrule before I so much as knew that Madame Novikoff existed, I need hardly point out the absurdity of this common legend as to the origin of my anti-Turkish enthusiasm. I

¹ *Memoirs of Sir T. Wemyss Reid*, p. 314.

did not meet Madame Novikoff until 1877. By that time the Bulgarian agitation, in which I had the honour to serve as Mr. Gladstone's henchman in the north country, was over. For good or for evil, my pro-Russian colours had been nailed to the mast years before. Hence it was natural, and indeed inevitable, that when the lines of battle drew closer, the fact of my existence should be signalled to my Russian ally, that we should join forces, and that from that day to this we should have fought together in our common cause.

[From this point begin my personal reminiscences of Madame Novikoff, with which are necessarily intermixed reminiscences of the work in which we were henceforth engaged. This book is not merely an attempt to collect the reminiscences and correspondence of Madame Novikoff, it is also a narrative of the gallant, and in the end successful, struggle in which she played a leading part for the creation of an entente between Russia and England. Madame Novikoff until 1876 had conducted her campaign chiefly in the society of the two capitals. My humbler rôle had been cast in the sphere of provincial journalism. But whether in high places or in low, we had been for years unconsciously co-operating in the same good cause. I was her senior in the service of the Press. Her first appeal to the British public by the printed word was in 1876. It was not till 1877 that Madame Novikoff began the regular campaign for an Anglo-Russian alliance. My record dates at least six years farther back. It was the writings—not the speeches—of Cobden which in my later teens impressed me with the conviction that, second only to the healing of the fatal schism between the two great English-speaking peoples, there

was no political duty so obvious and so imperious as that of removing the ill-feeling and jealousy which existed between Russia and England. Writing to-day, when I can survey forty years of constant journalistic activity, I can honestly claim that from first to last I have never once even wavered in my devotion to these two great causes. In good report and especially in ill report, when the war-clouds lowered and the hearts of men were failing them for fear of war, my writings stand on record to prove the unshaken fidelity with which I have done my best to promote a better understanding between Russia and my own country.

This vigilant championship of the cause of Russia in the English Press, which I had undertaken as a labour of love from my youth up, would never have brought me into communication with Madame Novikoff—or indeed with any prominent Russian, so indifferent are the Russians to what is said or written about them in foreign parts—if the Eastern crisis had not suddenly compelled attention to the fact that when Russia and England are at cross-purposes there can never be Peace and Liberty in the East. The moment the insurrection broke out in the Herzegovina I seized the occasion to proclaim, as vigorously as the columns of the *Northern Echo* allowed me, the approaching liberation of the Slavs. I urged England to share in the work of emancipation. M. Aksakoff and the Pan-Slavists of Moscow hardly spoke with more vehemence and fervour than I as to the duty of ending Ottoman Domination in Europe long before Mr. Gladstone had made his speech on the Berlin Memorandum, which preceded by months his pamphlet on the Bulgarian massacres. In the anti-Turkish agitation the north of England

was a long way in advance of the south. To quote Mr. Freeman's vigorous words : " Since the first day when the eyes of Western Europe began again to be turned to the rights and wrongs of South-Eastern Europe, your paper has stood before all others as the unflinching supporter of right against wrong. No other paper that I know has been so steadfast." It is the fashion to regard the popular revolt against the Turkish Alliance as having been initiated, or even engineered, by Mr. Gladstone. Nothing could be farther from the truth. He gave the cause the momentum which made it irresistible, but in the early months, when public opinion was in the making, many of us strained our eyes as anxiously in the direction of Hawarden as did the Irish Home Rulers in the early months of 1885. As one of those who was both a Bulgarian atrocity-monger and an Irish Home Ruler before Mr. Gladstone was either, I am in a position to speak with authority on that subject, and I well remember the impatience with which the more eager spirits on both occasions chafed at the delay which intervened between the opening of the campaign and the public assumption of the command by our Great Leader.

I asked Mr. Freeman who Madame Novikoff was. He replied on October 1 :—

" Mme de Novikoff is the sister of Kiréeff, the first Russian officer who fell in Servia last year, and about whom they had legends three months after his death, just as about Marko or any other ancient hero."

Madame Novikoff, replying to a letter in which I had referred to her brother, said :—



MADAME NICHOLAS KIRÉEFF.

"I am deeply thankful for your kindness, your sympathies for the memory of my brother. Well, yes, he was the most generous, chivalrous creature that ever lived, and his influence over those who came to know him did not cease to be felt even after his death. His wife (*née* Princess Anna Néswigsky), a very elegant and beautiful woman, is now with the army as sister of charity. Having husband and child, I could not take that line; still, wanting somehow or other to pursue his aim, I yielded to the pressure of my friends and began to write articles in two of our best Moscow papers, the object of which is to serve the Slavophile cause.

"But many Russians died just as nobly as he, though without the same *éclat* and only as his 'followers,' whilst he boldly took the initiative of a very noble cause."

I went up to London to see Madame Novikoff. From the day we met in Symonds's Hotel, in October 1877, we worked together with our utmost energy, in the cause of peace and fair-play.

The durability of the alliance then formed was the more remarkable because in many things Madame Novikoff and I were as far as the poles apart. She is Greek Orthodox, of noble family, and an autocrat by conviction. I am an English Nonconformist, born of the common people, and a Radical alike by temperament and conviction. We had, and have, serious differences of opinion upon many subjects. We are always at feud with each other on the subject of religious propaganda in Russia. She is not a partisan of the Duma, which I regard as the hope of the future. With the Nihilists she was always at war, whereas I have always had a sympathetic side for all the Sons

of the Revolution. Even when they are Soldiers of Despair their self-sacrifice is admirable. We differed also about the Jews. But none of these differences, grave and important though they might be, ever diverted us from the supreme object of our union, the promotion of a better understanding between our respective peoples.

To enable the two nations to understand all would enable them to pardon all. Hence I never hesitated to help Madame Novikoff to the best of my ability to set forth the Russian point of view on all pending questions, even when I had to tell her frankly I thought the Russians were quite mistaken. It really did not matter so much what I thought or what she thought; the essentially important thing was that we should co-operate in getting what the Russians and what the British thought fully understood in both countries. This attitude of mine has exposed me to much misunderstanding and consequent abuse. Because I have endeavoured always to make out the best case possible for the Russian Government in its controversies, both with its neighbours and with its own subjects, I have been accused of perjurying my soul, of holding a candle to tyranny, and of betraying the sacred cause of human freedom. These taunts leave me unmoved. My activities in the cause of human freedom, both in Russia and elsewhere, have been too multifarious and persistent for me seriously to heed such accusations. I do not think it is rational, because you sympathise with the victim of an oppressor, to refuse to afford the oppressor an opportunity of being heard in his own defence. A right that is the privilege of the vilest criminal in the dock may surely be claimed for any Government that disposes of the destinies of millions of human beings. The one

fatal danger to which nations are exposed in judging of the conduct of the Governments of other nations is that of inability to see that their policy, however mistaken it may be, is the policy not of devils but of human beings like ourselves. After audience has been given we may still pronounce judgment. "Strike, but hear," is a maxim for nations as well as individuals. And I am proud and grateful that I was able to do what little I could to enable Madame Novikoff to make the case of the Russian Government heard by my countrymen.

After this digression, which is necessary to explain how I came to have the honour of being associated with Madame Novikoff, and should now have the privilege of editing her reminiscences, I return to the correspondence.]

Mr. Freeman was as usual full of fight. Writing after the second reverse at Plevna, he tells Madame Novikoff: "We were horribly cast down for a bit, but things look better now." He deplores the lack of stalwart papers in London: "The *Daily News* is flabby and half-hearted; and the *Spectator*, though very good, is frightfully dull and solemn." He has been pounding away in the *Contemporary* in August and October, "specially dealing with the infamy of pretending neutrality, and then allowing Hobart, Baker, and the rest to fight on the side of the Turks." But he is "a little disheartened at fighting alone. Not a soul has taken up my case in *Contemporary* about Holmes, and Hobart, and Layard. All that *Spectator* can say is that it is 'readable'—a 'readable' indictment!"

In October Madame Novikoff received several letters from Mr. Gladstone:—

“October 10, 1877.

“MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—I am sorry to be able to answer your letter only in some haste ; but I make up for it by sending for your perusal a most interesting letter from Dr. Ziemann, and also one from Vienna that may be worth your reading. We are not going to the Egertons’. We go to Ireland on Wednesday next, and may be absent for three weeks. This year and last I had just returned from London when your visit was announced. I have no other trip to the metropolis in view : and my occupations here are so constant that I do not move often if I can help it.

“Even for us the tension of this period is great : I cannot but deeply sympathise with your personal feelings after all you have gone through. Our points of view are different, but I believe you and I look to the same end—in this Eastern Question I have no secrets. You see I am made responsible by many for everything : that under the circumstances is very easy to bear. My utterances to the world are very many : it is difficult to understand them without following them continually, and that is impossible. You perhaps have not seen my article on Egypt, and I enclose it herewith. Be assured, whether I say much or little, whether you hear of me or not, that nothing shall alter my course. And although Turkism is noisy and loud among us, and I am deeply ashamed of a portion of my countrymen, yet I am cheered when, as at Nottingham a fortnight ago, I speak to ten thousand people, and find them sound as ever.

“I agree about the probable issue of the war, and have rather regarded Turkish successes as misfortunes to Turkey.—Believe me sincerely yours,

“W. E. GLADSTONE.”

“HAWARDEN, *October 16, 1877.*

“MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—Dr. Turner’s letter is most interesting and excellent. He touches with reason and delicacy on Poland. I cannot wonder. You remember what passed between us last year on that subject. I sent you Dr. Ziemann, not as gospel, but on account of the very interesting and not unimportant account of his impressions of Constantinople.

“I am going off to Ireland, and shall, please God, migrate about there for some three weeks, always preserving privacy, if I can. But this Eastern Question has made me a very notorious character, more notorious, strange to say, than when I was Prime Minister.

“I am sorry if you do not go to the Egertons’. They are good people of high position, though they may have little foibles. I am rather desirous to know whether your Embassy received a communication from me concerning a letter of your War Minister, which he had written in consequence of what I thought a most heartless forgery, addressed to him under my name. I only want to know (when convenient), nothing more.—Believe me yours sincerely,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

“I do not think any rational person, of whatever opinions, believes that you are trying to annex Slav provinces.”

“*October 22, 1877.*

“MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—Your letter reached me this morning. God grant that the great victory (over Moukhtar Pasha at Aladja Dag¹) may

¹ The battle of Aladja Dag was fought in Armenia on October 14–15. The Russians, under the Grand Duke Michael, completely defeated the Turkish army under Moukhtar Pasha, capturing 32 guns and 10,000 prisoners.

accelerate the termination of a tremendous war with the accomplishment of its highest purposes, which will be a blessing to the world. I hasten to answer your inquiry about Mr. Cartwright. He is a very intelligent, accomplished gentleman, of a well-known English family, whose character and position will alike guarantee anything he may say. He is married to a German lady. Among other works he is also the author of a volume on the Order of Jesuits, and of a learned history of the Roman Conclave.

“ You may like to read the spirited song which I enclose. The author, Mr. Stephen de Ros, an Irish gentleman. I am told that opinion in this island is very Turkish. I observe that no one speaks *to me* on the subject. The Dublin newspapers here are no better than those of London.—Sincerely yours,

“ W. E. GLADSTONE.

“ You are quite welcome to take a copy of the song, if you should think it worth while. I am sorry I could not persuade you to go to Tatton.”

The Rev. W. Denton wrote on October 25 to Madame Novikoff :—

“ Mr. Gladstone thinks that unless some specific danger, some chance of an attempt to pass out of our state of doubtful neutrality into hostile action against Russia or of active aid to Turkey, it were better to defer any public meeting until just before the meeting of Parliament. Circumstances, however, may arise to make it desirable to hasten the meeting.”

Mr. Gladstone touched upon the same subject in his next letter from Ireland :—

“ *October 30, 1877.*

“ MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—I fear there is no likelihood of my being in London before or even soon after the 10th November, but I have nothing new to say on the great absorbing question. My thoughts are like the acts of a man who lives, as the saying is, in a glass beehive. The pain with which I contemplate the policy forced upon my country by its Government never can depart or abate.

“ That policy has been thoroughly ignoble: this and no other is the word for it. In such a sense I have spoken of it all along, publicly and privately, and I must so continue.

“ It is, however, a matter of much delicacy for me to choose proper opportunities of public speech, and naturally I am obliged to render myself the judge of many. I do not see that it would do harm if a meeting were to be held such as Mr. Denton proposes, but I do not think it the right time for me to attend such a meeting.

“ The darkest clouds appear again to hang over Turkey. I am one of those who all along have considered the successes she won to be to her not a benefit but a new misfortune. Those successes engaged you more deeply—made the war not what it had first been, but a question of honour, almost of life, for you. This I said the other day to the Viceroy of Ireland, the *only* man who has spoken to me on the subject since I touched these shores! Our policy, as I have said, has been ignoble—look well to yours. I firmly hope your Emperor will not allow his eye to be diverted from that work of European liberation which he has undertaken. He has need of all human and of more than human wisdom. May God give it him!

“I have often told you that, *if* you think it a matter of any moment to act upon English opinion, you should, like the Turks, act more upon and through the Press. I have also told you how the chapter of Polish accusations, unanswered, would and must tell.

“I fancy one in answer says to me, ‘Do not talk about Russia in Poland; think of England in India, Jamaica, and elsewhere.’ My reply is that to any one who will show up (to) the world misdeeds of ours, I for one shall be very thankful. Count Schouvaloff kindly sent me the forged letter. It was contemptible.—With all best wishes for your health and travels, sincerely yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

“We go to Carton, Maynooth (Duke of Leinster’s), in the end of the week.”

The tide of victory now set in steadily for the Russians. Up till the victory of Aladjä Dagħ, Turkish partisans were confident that the Russians would be beaten. That was never Mr. Gladstone’s opinion. When the Russian prospects seemed blackest he wrote to me :—

“Failure would now be such a calamity for Russia that she is under a moral compulsion to persevere. The question is very like that raised in the American War, 1861–65, as to the likelihood of ultimate success. To me Turkism has always seemed very blind in its exultation over the Turkish successes. Nothing short of entire success can be of real value to them.”

Of even partial success the Turks had soon no hope. Kars was captured by assault on November 18. When, on December 16, Osman Pasha surrendered Plevna, it was evident even to the most optimist of Turkophiles that the game was up.

But it was not less clear that when once the Turkish resistance was beaten down and the Russian forces approached Constantinople the danger of war between England and Russia would increase. Discussing this with Madame Novikoff, I suggested to her that it would be very useful if she would write a series of letters from the Russian point of view for the information of the British public. She hesitated. I consulted Mr. Freeman. As his reply shows, he was not very sanguine :—

“About Mme Novikoff, she would be most useful in supplying facts, as she has the means of getting at the highest quarters in Russia. But I should doubt about her as a correspondent—I mean, to print her letters. Of course, her point of view as a Russian is not the same as ours, and she is sometimes a little overflowing with enthusiasm.”

But to my thinking, genuine, unselfish enthusiasm was the very element that was most needed. Madame Novikoff consented, and the result more than vindicated my confidence.

Her letter describing “The two Russias, Official and Unofficial,” the Russia of St. Petersburg and the Russia of Moscow, left a permanent impression on the English mind. Nothing more timely and more telling could have appeared. Nor was Mr. Freeman slow to recognise in unstinted terms his appreciation of the services rendered by so gallant an ally in the war which we were all waging against Lord Beaconsfield.

Lord Mayor’s Day, 1877, brought its accustomed Prime Minister’s speech ; but, compared with the three-campaign speech of 1876, Lord Beaconsfield’s

discourse was comparatively tame. Mr. Freeman, writing on November 11, noted the difference :—

“ The Jew was less rampageous than I thought he might be. But the Greek ! Surely these traitors who sell themselves to lie for the devil and his angels are almost worse than those who sell themselves to fight for them. Hobart is not, like Musurus, helping to rivet the fetters of his own people, and I believe the wretch is accepted in that precious London society, which seems to have become an unmixed synagogue of Satan.”

The Greek to whom Mr. Freeman referred in such vigorous terms was Musurus Pasha, then Turkish Ambassador at the Court of St. James.

Mr. Gladstone was still in Ireland, but he was making his way homeward. His next letter was dated, “ Hawarden, November 13.”

“ MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—I returned last night from a most interesting visit to Ireland. We had a horrid passage. I cannot say much for the state of Irish opinion on the Eastern Question, except among some very superior people ; but I find none of the furious anti-Russianism or Philo-Turkism there which prevails among a party here, and I have seen nothing corresponding with the venomous Turkish Press of the Metropolis.

“ Yesterday morning on landing I had to address a meeting at Holyhead ; and I did not fail to put in, as well as I could on escaping from a malignant sea, one or two things which the time required.

“ God save the poor Turk from his ‘ friends.’ Presuming he is beaten in this contest which those friends have brought upon him, I trust Russia will

be just and moderate ; but it is impossible and absurd to expect that she should exact *no* sort of compensation for her great efforts and sacrifices. I do not for a moment suppose that she will deviate from her pledges as to the European, especially the Bulgarian Slavs. Glorious, heroic little Montenegro ! God bless and prosper it !

“ I have read with peculiar interest the article you have sent me and, I hope, have meant me to keep. It is capital ; and it shows me that you have been doing capital work in Russia, and have laboured to unite the nations. Blessed are the peacemakers ; but among us many are endeavouring, I hope unconsciously, to do the devil’s work the other way. You have another great battle with the Government. The issue with the nation (not with the Upper Class, the mass of which is hopelessly wrong) will depend on the mode on which the issue is presented. But I have felt their pulse, the pulse of the people in tens of thousands, and I know that the flame which burned in September and October 1876 is burning still.

“ God bless all your efforts for the just and the true.
—Sincerely yours, W. E. GLADSTONE.

“ P.S.—What does Lord B. mean by saying at the Guildhall that your Emperor pledged himself on one occasion ‘ that he sought no increase of territory ’ ? I don’t understand it.”

Canon Liddon wrote me an interesting letter on November 15 from Oxford on the attitude of the Anglican clergy in relation to the crisis in the East :—

“ MY DEAR SIR,—I agree with you in deploring the line which has been followed by a considerable section

of the clergy in this Eastern Question. To me it is quite clear that they have, however unconsciously, sacrificed those moral considerations which ought to weigh with us of all men—more than any others—to the claims of political party. Of my own friends, the greater number, I think, agree more or less closely with myself; but undoubtedly the majority of the higher clergy have allowed their Conservatism—which is supposed to be vitally concerned in supporting Lord Beaconsfield—to control more important and serious considerations. I had the pleasure of seeing Madame Novikoff when she was in town the other day. She has done good service by explaining to her countrymen that *all* England has not gone mad, and that the minority is sufficiently powerful to prevent any action against Russia on behalf of the Turks. I am very glad that she is to write to the *Northern Echo*, and shall be greatly obliged to you for sending it me.

“From what I hear, whatever may be the wishes of the Prime Minister,—and unfortunately there is not much room for mistake about them,—it will not be possible to plunge us into war against Russia, even if the Turkish defence should collapse as completely in Bulgaria as it has collapsed in Armenia. We *could* not go to war without an ally, and the only possible ally is Austria. And, notwithstanding the vehement pressure which is exerted at Pesth, the Austrian Government is inclining more and more decidedly to alliance with Berlin, which, under present circumstances, means St. Petersburg. I must not mention my authority; but you may, I think, rely on this as accurate. And a suspicion of this is at the bottom of the despairing anger of papers like the *Pall Mall* and the *Morning Post*.”



Photograph by the London Stereoscopic Co.]

MRS. CATHERINE GLADSTONE.

Madame Novikoff's relations with Mrs. Gladstone were always extremely cordial. I have already quoted Mrs. Gladstone's letter announcing the publication of the *Bulgarian Horrors*. I quote one other letter from the same friendly hand because the phrase Mrs. Gladstone uses—"grand intelligence"—to describe the fall of Kars shows as well as anything could do how heartily the Gladstone household sympathised with the Russian cause:—

"November 20, 1877.

"DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—How very kind of you to think of the excellent Russian tea! A great many thanks. We shall think of you specially as we are sitting round the fire enjoying it. This is a day I am indeed glad to write to you upon. What grand intelligence! God grant that all may now prosper. We have been reading your letter in the *Northern Echo* with great interest and pleasure. So clever and excellent. My husband will go to London about the 3rd or 4th of December for a few days. He is particularly well. This will give you pleasure. All good wishes.—Dear Madame Novikoff, yours most heartily,

CATH. GLADSTONE."

The news of the capture of Kars reached England on November 20.

Mr. Gladstone wrote three days later:—

"November 23, 1877.

"DEAR MADAME N.,—I return you proof, and I have also read to-day your most able letter on Forbes's article sent to me by the Editor of the *Northern Echo*. I wish it may obtain the attention it deserves. I hope to leave London on the 3rd, and could obey your commands at 4.30 on that day.—Yours sincerely,

"W. E. GLADSTONE.

"It is singular that I am preparing to lecture at 7 p.m. on Forbes's paper myself."

"Singular" perhaps, but natural enough that two such keen advocates of the same cause should spontaneously be found engaged in repelling a hostile attack. Mr. Forbes was the well-known war correspondent of the *Daily News* who after his return from the seat of war had written an article in the *Nineteenth Century* which excited considerable indignation in the Slavophile camp.

It should never be forgotten that the anti-Turkish movement was from first to last moral rather than political. This was very clearly stated by Mr. Sheldon Amos, who, writing to Madame Novikoff in November, said :—

"The opposition to war must not be based on abstract pacific principles, or on insular principles, or on mere principles of interest or policy. If these grounds are once taken, they will give way before a growing war fever and fallacious calculations of expediency presented by the other side. The only safe, common, and unassailable foundation on which the people must be taught to rest is that it is a moral iniquity to prolong the policy which has so long bolstered up Turkey—in spite of her long-proved incapacity for tolerable government, her rotten morality, and her insatiable wickedness—simply because a wall of some kind, never mind of what materials, must be found between Russia and British India."¹

¹ The pulpit drum ecclesiastic was beaten very vigorously at times during these stormy days. I find among Madame Novikoff's papers an outline of a sermon preached November 1877 by the Rev. Canon Malcolm MacColl from the familiar text from Deborah's song of triumph over the defeat of Sisera (Judg. v. 23), "Curse ye Meroz, saith the

Madame Novikoff's letters—the O. K. Letters, as they were termed; for in those days, in order not to offend the susceptibilities of her Ambassador brother-in-law, she signed all her contributions "O. K.," the initials of her maiden name, Olga Kiréeff—were appearing in the *Northern Echo*, attracting so much attention from their vigour, good temper, and incisive wit that she was urged to republish them. This was accordingly done.

They were a frank, outspoken, uncompromising defence of the popular Russian point of view, enlivened by many a dashing foray into the enemy's camp. Some critics complained that they were irritating, and it cannot be denied that they were not mealy-

Angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." The introduction explained why Meroz was cursed and the justification of the malediction. The body of the sermon applied that curse, with the utmost particularity of detail, to those who did not come to the help of the Russians. The following heads of his discourse may not be without interest even to-day:—

1. Why sympathise with Russians? Ans. Condition of Christians. Describe—

- (1) Legal conditions.

- (2) How far corresponding to practice.

- (3) (a) Evidence; (b) arms; (c) taxation, 67 per cent.; (d) toleration (on the whole parallel with the oppression of Jabin).

2. Assumed prosperity of Bulgarians. How far true; reason; fertility of soil; industry of people; paucity of Turks. Explain Pomaks of Armenia, Bosnia, etc.

3. That, per contra, tax-gathering, Zaptiehs, and girls. Burial certificates.

4. Rayahs might escape all this by becoming renegades.

5. Russians themselves under Russian rule; its meaning given, and why. Spanish Armada, etc.

6. Contrast Russian conduct with other Powers, England especially. Turks and their country. Turks would benefit.

7. "Curse ye Meroz" true now as of old. British interest. Opium trade. Drug in India. Enforced merchandise in China. Indian famine caused by it.

Conclusion. Nations made up of individuals. Make preparations. Ten men would have saved cities of plain.

mouthed. Madame Novikoff in after years described my book *Truth about Russia* as "a barrel full of honey with a spoonful of tar." Her Jingo critics complained that in her own book the proportions were reversed.¹

As the Russian armies began to break down the resistance of the Turks, the outcry of the Jingoës waxed louder and louder. Madame Novikoff in 1876 witnessed the culmination of the anti-Turkish agitation when she attended the meeting of the St. James's Hall Conference on the eve of the Conference at Constantinople. In 1877 she saw the end of the period of sullen neutrality which prevailed from the declaration of war till the fall of Plevna. It was her privilege or her doom to challenge the verdict of the British public in favour of Russia at the precise moment when the dammed-up fountain of the great deep of Jingo passion was about to be unloosed. Her first book, with the challenging title, *Is Russia Wrong?* was published when the Russian armies were pouring southward toward Constantinople, and Lord Beaconsfield was preparing to send the British fleet through the Dardanelles. As the hostile forces were mustering for the fatal clash, Madame Novikoff stood up, and in the momentary lull before the storm she made her appeal to the nation which seemed drifting into war. It was a gallant effort. It was as unprecedented as were the circumstances in which the two nations were placed.

¹ The following were the contents of *Is Russia Wrong?* which was published by Hodder & Stoughton at 2s. 6d., and went into a second edition:—

"Secret Societies and the War," "The Two Russias—Moscow and St. Petersburg," "Compensation for Sacrifices," "Terms of Peace, possible and impossible," "Some English prejudices," "Traditional Policy," "Russians in Central Asia," "Mr. Forbes's Article," "M. Katkoff and the *Moscow Gazette*."

From the Government Madame Novikoff appealed to the nation. Speaking as the representative of the popular forces which in her own country had overruled an autocrat and compelled him to undertake a war to which the Russian Government was opposed and for which it was unprepared, she appealed to the popular masses in our country to overrule its constitutional Government and to compel Lord Beaconsfield to keep the peace.

She had no credentials of a formal kind. She acted on her own initiative, relying solely upon her knowledge of her own people and her confidence in the sympathies of the nation to whom she appealed.

Mr. Froude wrote a preface to *Is Russia Wrong?* in which he disappointed many of his friends by the somewhat frigid tone of his introduction, which was chiefly devoted to a setting forth of Mr. Froude's own view of the Eastern Question.¹ But the appeal stood in no need of any preface. It spoke for itself. It

¹ Mr. Kinglake twice referred to this subject in his letters:—

"If Froude really goes writing about the mere war instead of exalting you, I shall be more angry with him than I was with Henry Bulwer at Richmond when he talked to me of your intellect, Miss, and forgot to speak of your beauty! If he has really written a cold-blooded preface, I shall come to the conclusion that, by studying the character, or rather the *état*, of Queen Elizabeth, he has gone and turned himself into an old maid!"

And again he wrote a few days later:—

"The great oracle Hayward has spoken to me again, and very strongly indeed, of the power and excellence of your writing; the truth being, Miss, that you express many of the opinions which he is in the habit of enforcing in his energetic, violent way. He, however, speaks with displeasure of Froude's preface, condemning it for being, as he expresses it, so 'Cold.' It is to me most extraordinary that, having undertaken to write the preface (which he was not compelled to do), he should have omitted what was obviously the main part of his task—namely, that of indicating the value and merit of the writings which he was introducing to the public."

Mr. Froude, however, made handsome amends two years later when he wrote the preface to *Russia and England*.

was enthusiastically received by the Liberal Press, who at that moment sorely needed a vigorous and decided lead. On the other hand, it brought down upon Madame Novikoff the angry denunciations of the Jingoës. The *World* denounced her as a Russian emissary, and added, "The authoress is a paid agent of the Government of Russia, whose trade it is to promote the interests of that country by 'cozening influential elderly politicians' and by ferreting out 'useful intelligence from them.'"¹

¹ *Is Russia Wrong?* was published just before Christmas Day 1877. Plevna had capitulated on December 19. Madame Novikoff having waited to see her book through the press, left London for St. Petersburg.



WILLIAM T. STEAD, 1877.

CHAPTER III.

AN ANGLO-RUSSIAN INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT.

THE six months that followed the publication of *Is Russia Wrong?* was a prolonged crisis the memory of which still haunts me. For half a year two great nations faced each other, threatening war on sea and land round all the world—wide, wasting war—and for what? Looking back on that distracted time, the only outstanding surviving monument to explain, although not to justify, the bellicose policy of the British Government, the frenetic agitation of the Jingo Press, is—Macedonia! The re-enslavement of that hapless province was the solitary fruit of Lord Beaconsfield's anti-Russian policy. All the fuss and the fidget, all the fool fury of the London Stock Exchange, all the promenading of the ironclads, with the resultant exacerbation of the sentiments of the two nations, whose friendship is essential to the peace of Asia—all these had as their sole practical and permanent outcome the thrusting back of the Macedonians, liberated by the Treaty of San Stefano, under the heel of the Sultan and his Bashî-Bazouks. It is some slight consolation that Macedonia has been the nightmare of British Diplomacy ever since, a constant menace to the peace of Europe. And despite the young Turkish revolution, we are by no means out of the wood yet.

Looking back upon the fears and alarms of that

mad and distracted time, it is difficult to realise that the chief actors in the fantastic phantasmagoria could have taken themselves seriously, could have been taken seriously even by their opponents. All Europe was kept on the *qui vive* for six months. The menace of a world-wide war was impending like the sword of Damocles over the head of the human race. And all the while, the criminals whose policy of bluster occasioned all the unrest advertised to the whole world their own belief in its unreality by ostentatiously refusing to make any serious preparations for the struggle which they appeared to challenge. A generation which spent £250,000,000 in a war with 60,000 farmers in South Africa, can only marvel at the spectacle of a Government refusing to make any preparations for a threatened war with a first-class Power beyond raising a loan of six millions sterling! Mr. Gathorne Hardy, one of the most bellicose of Lord Beaconsfield's lieutenants, frankly admitted that if war ensued, the expenditure would be nearer six hundred millions than six. But beyond borrowing the six millions Ministers did nothing. They were careful to explain that their naval estimates showed practically no increase, and that the fleet on the Peace footing of the previous year was adequate for every emergency that was likely to arise.

The danger of a policy of blustering bluff is that, like Mr. Chamberlain in 1899, you may suddenly be called upon to make good your threats. Fortunately for England and for humanity, the Russian Government was more patient than President Kruger, and war was averted. No one, however, could foresee what a day might bring forth. Hence a period of feverish excitement, in which more than once all hope of preserving peace seemed to vanish.

During the six months which intervened between the publication of *Is Russia Wrong?* and the signature of the Berlin Treaty, Madame Novikoff, almost single-handed, in the Russian Press maintained a splendid, although at times a forlorn, struggle in the interests of peace. At the same time that she was writing and arguing in favour of patience in Moscow, she was constantly inspiring the friends of peace in England to maintain with unabated courage their struggle against the war policy of Lord Beaconsfield. During the whole of that time Madame Novikoff was the inspiring soul of the faithful band which in Russia and in England refused to despair of peace, and which ultimately had the supreme satisfaction of averting war.

The importance of the rôle which she played has never been adequately realised, and at first sight her rôle might be deemed impossible. But a moment's reflection will show how it was possible for her to intervene with effect in both countries. In Moscow she stood as the representative of Mr. Gladstone's England. She believed in its existence, she was satisfied as to the sincerity of its leaders, and she was supplied day by day with every item of evidence that was likely to convince the Russians that Lord Beaconsfield could not, even if he would, plunge England into war with Russia. To preserve peace, the essential thing was to restrain the Russians from any despairing or resentful action which would play into the hands of the English war party. This was the task to which she applied herself in Moscow. In England the important thing was to convince the leaders of the anti-Jingo masses that the Russians intended to play fair, that there was no fear of any breach of solemn covenants, and that the aims and ends of Russian

policy would be restricted within the area outlined before the war began. Being thus in a position which kept her in close and constant touch with the Gladstonians of England and with both the Press and the Government in Russia, it is obvious that she held a place of vantage indeed.

The Turkophile papers had their suspicions, to which from time to time they gave more or less angry utterance, as to the close relations which existed between Madame Novikoff and the Gladstonians. But few, hardly any, of the Gladstonian party themselves were aware of the efficient help which they received all through that crisis from the sister of Nicholas Kiréeff. As most of the communications passed through my hands, I can speak at first hand as to the invaluable services which Madame Novikoff rendered in baffling the war policy of our Jingoës and in keeping up the courage of the friends of peace in both countries.

The question whether, when the Government of your own country is threatening to embark upon what you believe to be an unjust war, you are justified in entering into a close working alliance with a citizen of the country of the possible enemy in order to avert war, is one that was settled in the affirmative in 1876-78. Speaking at the Palmerston Club at Oxford, January 30, 1878, Mr. Gladstone said, "To his own great pain and with infinite reluctance, but under the full and strong conviction, he may say, of political old age, for the last eighteen months he might be said to have played the part of an agitator. His purpose had been to the best of his power, day and night, week by week, month by month, to counter-work what he believed to be the purposes of Lord Beaconsfield." During the whole of those eighteen months, and never

more so than when the crisis approached the climax, Mr. Gladstone rejoiced to find in Madame Novikoff a coadjutor capable of affording him effective support where it was most needed.

When Madame Novikoff left London, at Christmas 1877, the spirits of the Jingoës were cowed. The Peace party in the Cabinet had succeeded in imposing its will upon Lord Beaconsfield. In the country the Turkish party had apparently lost heart. The bye-elections showed unmistakable signs of the flowing tide of Liberalism which in 1880 was to rise to the Midlothian high-water mark.

The fortunes of the war were unmistakably on the side of Russia. Alike in Asia Minor and in the Balkan Peninsula, the Turkish armies were in full flight. The Gladstonians exulted over the coming liberation of Bulgaria, and the more sanguine scoffed at the notion that Lord Beaconsfield at the eleventh hour would dare to lead a divided nation to the support of the tottering Empire of the Ottomans.

Among Madame Novikoff's friends only Mr. Froude was despondent.

I did not share his forebodings. I lived in the north of England, from which, as Mr. Gladstone's unofficial lieutenant, it had been my privilege to give the signal, time and again, for demonstrations of public enthusiasm in favour of the liberation of the Slavs. It was natural that I should be more sanguine than a denizen of the West End of London, which even in the springtime of the atrocity agitation had been stolidly Turkophile. As I was Madame Novikoff's editor and correspondent, I impressed upon her my confidence that Lord Beaconsfield would not be allowed to plunge England into war for the Turks.

There was no mystery, although there was no publicity, about the simple arrangements which were made for keeping the leaders of the popular anti-Turkish movement in the two countries in touch with each other so as to enable them the more effectively "to counter-work," to use Mr. Gladstone's phrase, "the purposes of Lord Beaconsfield," to secure the liberation of Bulgaria and the final overthrow of the Ottoman domination in Europe. The organisation, if we may dignify so simple an arrangement by so high-sounding an epithet, consisted of two persons, Madame Novikoff in Moscow and myself in Darlington. Madame Novikoff in Moscow was in the centre of the Pan-Slav movement. She was in close and constant touch with M. Katkoff, the most redoubtable journalist in Russia, and with M. Aksakoff, the President of the Pan-Slavonic Committee. She contributed to the *Moscow Gazette*, the *Russ*, and the *Contemporary News*. She was actively engaged in Red Cross work in Moscow, and her family and social connections brought her into more or less intimate relations with most of the influential people in Russia, from Prince Gortschakoff to M. Dostoyeffsky. She kept up a constant correspondence with many of the leading people in England, and she undertook to act as correspondent for the *Northern Echo*. The *Northern Echo*, the first halfpenny morning newspaper published in this country, had been started by Mr. J. Hyslop Bell in the year 1870 at Darlington, as the most central point from which to reach the thriving industrial population of South Durham and Cleveland. I was appointed Editor in 1871, when I was twenty-two years old. The paper was from the first a fighting organ of advanced Liberalism, and it was largely owing to its energy and enthusiasm that at the General

Election of 1874, the year of the first Conservative reaction, the constituencies in the district which it served not only remained true to their Liberal allegiance but rooted out the few Conservatives who had survived the Liberal floodtide of 1868.

After the election of an unbroken phalanx of Liberals by the County Palatine, the *Northern Echo* next attracted attention by the exceeding vehemence with which it threw itself into the organisation of the National Protest against the Turkish Alliance which followed the atrocities in Bulgaria of 1876. Its influence as an organ of the new Crusaders extended far beyond the comparatively restricted area of its regular circulation. Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright, Mr. Freeman, and other leaders commended its exertions and relied upon it as a Warden of the Northern Marches. I had the threads of the popular agitation in the north from Manchester to Edinburgh, and by degrees I had come to be regarded as the fugleman of Hawarden. In that capacity there were few leaders in the fray with whom I was not in communication personally or by post. When Madame Novikoff undertook to send me correspondence from Moscow, I undertook to send marked copies of the papers containing her letters to about two hundred of the leading members of the anti-Turkish party. The *Northern Echo* thus came to be a means of communication between all those upon whom lay the direction of the anti-Turkish agitation. It was more than this: it was the headquarters staff of the Intelligence Department of the anti-Turkish campaign. In its columns may still be found the unofficial gazette of the popular movement, and the passionate and sonorous invective of its leading articles awoke sympathetic echoes wherever Slavs or the friends of

the Slavs came together between the meridians of Moscow and of Manchester.

When Madame Novikoff returned to Moscow, I was appointed English correspondent of the *Moscow Gazette*. My contributions to M. Katkoff's waste-paper basket were much more numerous than those which found their way into his columns. The really important work was that of keeping Madame Novikoff regularly and promptly posted as to the progress of the campaign against Lord Beaconsfield, whilst she in return undertook to keep me posted as to the ebb and flow of the tide in the fiery heart of Muscovy.

I wrote to her every day, sending her extracts from letters, newspaper cuttings, and a summary of news of the day. Sometimes, when the matter was urgent, I telegraphed; at other times I drew up brief reports for submission to those whom it most concerned. By this means a sure and direct channel of communication was kept open between the headquarters of the two anti-Turkish camps, without any one having any responsibility for what was done with the exception of Madame Novikoff and myself.

It will be seen from the extracts from the correspondence of this period that this simple Intelligence Department enabled me to keep Madame Novikoff punctually informed of all the ever-shifting phases of the prolonged crisis.

My correspondents included Lord Derby and Lord Carnarvon, after they left the Cabinet; Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright, Mr. Forster, the Duke of Argyll, Mr. H. R. Grenfell, Lord Courtney, Lord Rosebery, Mr. Chamberlain, Sir James Stansfeld, Mr. Freeman, Mr. Froude, Canon Liddon, Dean Church, Sir George Cox, etc. etc. How many of them were aware that in

communicating with me they were writing to the confidential correspondent of Madame Novikoff I do not know, but as many of them only knew me through Madame Novikoff, it is probable they had a shrewd suspicion that I shared my information with her. Some of them wrote desiring me to send on their letters to Moscow. Others, like Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Forster, were informed by me of what I was doing, and they adopted me as their intermediary for the transmission of hints, warnings, and suggestions to the anti-Turkish headquarters at Moscow.

I told Mr. Forster I sent Madame Novikoff reports, and he said that I was very wise to do so, but I should not let the general public know what I was doing.

Mr. Forster's caution in recommending that the existence of this Anglo-Russian Intelligence Department should not be blazoned abroad on the housetops was as characteristic as it was unnecessary. I fully appreciated the importance of not letting your left hand know what your right hand did. When I wrote to Mr. Gladstone on the subject, I specially insisted upon the value of secrecy.

Mr. Gladstone promptly responded to my request. Both then and on subsequent occasions he showed his appreciation of the channel thus opened for interchange of information between the two popular camps.

Of course, had the existence of this arrangement been suspected at the time, there would have been a hideous outcry on the part of the Jingoës and a piteous bleat of dismay on the part of many weaklings among the Liberals, who were always absurdly nervous lest they should be believed to have dealings with the Russians. It is a significant fact that during

the whole time of the Eastern agitation no Liberal editor ever deemed it prudent to mention the fact of Madame Novikoff's friendship with Mr. Gladstone. The only allusions to an intimacy which bore such excellent fruit are to be found in the columns of Jingo papers, who gave publicity to the fact in the firm belief that they could in no way more effectively injure the Gladstonian cause. Mr. Gladstone himself was superior to such timorous prejudice. As we have seen, he almost ostentatiously flaunted his friendship with Madame Novikoff before the world at the time of the St. James's Hall Conference ; and, so far from wishing to conceal his correspondence, he told Madame Novikoff, in the hearing of myself and others, that he had no objection to the publication in the *Times* of every letter he had ever addressed to her. Few of Mr. Gladstone's followers had this moral courage, which made him so indifferent to the scandalmongering of his enemies.

The period between Christmas 1877 and mid-summer 1878 is full of interest to the statesman and to the historian. Most of the actors in the drama of those years are dead. A few survive stricken in years or health, like the Sultan and Mr. Chamberlain. The majority of those whose names figure in this history are no longer with us. But the great issues that were at stake are as vital as ever. The supreme question of the relationship between the Russian and British Empires is not less important to-day than it was thirty years ago. The fate of the Balkan Peninsula still trembles in the balance. But still wider questions were raised by the crisis. When the British Government is bellicose and anti-Russian, how far may loyal Britons be pacific and pro-Russian ? The course taken by Mr. Gladstone when he counter-

worked Lord Beaconsfield was identical with that which excited such fury against the pro-Boers during the South African War. Another question full of abiding interest is, leaving right and wrong on one side, How far can a party in opposition count upon popular support in checkmating a Government that is bent upon going to war? And yet a still more important question emerges: Of what kind of fibre, moral and political, is the British Democracy composed? How does it respond to the conflicting appeals of duty and of interest, of passion and of reason? Is it stable or vacillating? How far can it be depended upon in a crisis, in which the issues of peace and war hang trembling upon a hair, to display self-control, or will it be swept away by windy gusts of pseudo-patriotic passion? Upon all these weighty matters, and upon this last above all, much light is thrown by the correspondence in the archives of the Anglo-Russian Intelligence Department at Moscow and Darlington.

Incidentally also there is some light, but not much, thrown upon the working of that cumbrous machine the Russian Autocracy. For the Russian Government was dominated by considerations, military and financial, which did not permit of much margin for the play of popular forces. The Slavonic agitation of 1876 which had compelled the Government to begin the war had largely spent its force. The question of questions for the Russian Government was whether the British Government would or would not force upon them another war by intervening to deprive them and their protégés of the fruits of victory. Every scrap of evidence bearing upon that point was of the utmost importance. The Russians, like the English Liberals, profoundly distrusted Lord Beaconsfield. They believed that if he could he would not hesitate

to intervene even at the eleventh hour. But was Lord Beaconsfield master in his own Cabinet? Was his Cabinet strong enough to disregard the opposition which the Gladstonians were pledged to offer to any warlike adventure? How far could Russia depend upon the resolution and unanimity of the Liberal party? If they could have relied upon either Lord Beaconsfield or upon his colleagues or upon the Opposition to avert another war, they would not have needed to make such vast military preparations as those which still further depleted their treasury between February and June. It was for them almost a matter of life and death to know whether it was necessary to prepare for an attack by the army and navy of Great Britain, with or without the Austrians. As events proved, their one anxiety was to avoid having such a war forced upon them. But was it possible for them, strive how they might, to avoid the collision for which Lord Beaconsfield and the Jingoës were working night and day?

None could tell. The extracts from Madame Novikoff's correspondence show how steadily her English friends argued for a policy of hope, and patience, and confidence on the part of Russia, and how careful they were to keep their Russian allies informed of the latest and most authentic intelligence as to the fluctuating chances of peace and war so far as they depended upon the balance of forces among the conflicting parties in the English political arena.

CHAPTER IV.

JANUARY 1878.

THE story of the final struggle divides itself naturally into three chapters. The first covers the period from December 16, when it was decided to summon Parliament on January 17, to March 3, when the Treaty of Peace was signed at San Stefano. In this period the anti-Turkish peace party was triumphant. The second period lasted from the signature of the Treaty of San Stefano to the signature of the Salisbury-Schouvaloff Memorandum—that is to say, from March 3 to May 30. During this period the agitation against the Government was less successful. The pro-Russian minority being no longer able to rally the anti-Turkish majority in opposition to the Government,—since the Turks had been eliminated from the problem,—Lord Beaconsfield seemed to have it all his own way. This rendered all the more conspicuous his collapse at a moment when he seemed to be for the first time master of the situation. The third and final stage of the prolonged struggle was brought to a close by the signature of the Treaty of Berlin. This was a scenic and formal ratification of the Schouvaloff Memorandum, after which the final repudiation of every principle of the original policy of Lord Beaconsfield was still further illustrated and emphasised by the annexation of Cyprus and the signature of the Anglo-Turkish Convention.

The brief but determined struggle against the pro-Turkish policy of Lord Beaconsfield before the meeting of Parliament in January 1878 was in many ways more interesting and instructive than the original outburst of national indignation in the early autumn of 1876. The first atrocity agitation was primarily humanitarian. It was the first presentation of a great moral issue in foreign policy before the British democracy. Naturally enough, many joined in it without reflecting upon the logical consequences that necessarily followed a repudiation of the Turkish alliance. Many of these recoiled, as has been shown, when Mr. Gladstone in 1877 attempted to induce the nation which had broken with the Turks to ally itself with the Russians in imposing the will of Europe upon the recalcitrant Sultan. At the end of 1877 it was a moot point whether the nation which had been anti-Turkish in 1876, but which in 1877 had not been sufficiently anti-Turkish to ally itself with Russia, would in 1878 retain enough of its anti-Turkish convictions to veto any attempt to make war upon Russia in defence of the wreck of the Turkish Empire.

There is no doubt at all that in December the advocates for war had honestly persuaded themselves that the nation would support Lord Beaconsfield if he decided to draw the sword. Plevna was not captured till December 9. At Christmas the Russian armies were still north of the Balkans. Lord Beaconsfield himself had said little after his Mansion House speech in which he had hinted ominously at a concerted intervention to bring the war to a close. But his fuglemen in the Press were full of ardour for war, and the war-dogs of the Cabinet, Mr. Hardy (afterwards Lord Cranbrook) and Lord John Manners (afterwards the Duke of Rutland), had been giving

tongue in very blatant fashion. The area of disturbance in the East began to spread. Servia declared war on December 14. The *Standard*, which posed as the Ministerial organ, declared oracularly that the Russians must be forbidden to cross the Balkans, and this at a time when the Turkish Government in its request for mediation declared that the territorial and political integrity of the Ottoman Empire was a *sine quâ non*!

The anti-Turks were on the qui vive. "Beaconsfield Pasha," they declared, "is preparing to imitate the example of Osman, the hero of Plevna. At any moment we may expect to hear that he has made a last despairing effort to break out from his position of enforced neutrality. Like the knights of Branksome Hall, who 'quitted not their harness bright, neither by day nor yet by night,' we must be ever on the alert—

'They carved at the meal with gloves of steel,
And they drank the red wine through the helmet barr'd.'

And Englishmen at Christmas time must be ready at a moment's notice to declare that any minister who would go to war to keep the Turk in Constantinople was a traitor to his Queen, his country, and his God."

Germany and Austria refused to join in the proposed mediation. The British Cabinet, meeting on December 18, decided to open Parliament on January 17. What did it mean? The *Standard* authoritatively announced that Parliament was summoned to vote money for "such an increase to our armaments as the present state of Europe demands," and went on to discuss the best points for disembarking a British army in Turkey. The opinion was

generally prevalent in London that nothing but an overwhelming demonstration against war would save the country from being involved in hostilities. The *Pall Mall Gazette* complacently remarked that the St. James's Hall clique would find itself nowhere in any further attempt to compel the Government to abstain from a war which was desired by the immense majority of the nation. A very able but little-known City organ called *Financial Opinion* shrieked for war as vehemently as *Vanity Fair* and other organs of the Clubs and the Stock Exchange.

On the other hand, the pro-Russians exulted at the opportunity of once more securing for their agitation against the war policy of the Government the alliance of the large body of opinion that was in favour of neutrality. It was believed that Lord Salisbury, Lord Derby, Lord Carnarvon, and possibly Lord Cross and Sir Stafford Northcote, were opposed to Lord Beaconsfield's policy of intervention. It was known that many Conservatives locally influential had publicly declared against intervention. And there was no doubt that the pro-Russians themselves had been inspired to fresh exertions by the letters of Madame Novikoff. It is not difficult, for instance, to trace her influence and that of the memory of her brother Nicholas in the following passage, which appeared in a militant organ of the party:—

“The Russian people, long excluded from what Mazzini called ‘the fraternal banquet of the European peoples,’ has at last gained admission through the gateway of Sacrifice; Russia has found her soul. A nation which has been thrilled from centre to circumference by that Divine Enthusiasm of Humanity which has led the Russians to die in tens of thousands

to make Bulgaria free has a great future before it. Nations, like individuals, are purified through suffering. How keenly the Russian nation is suffering to-day no one but Russians knows. 'The sacred dead, who went but who return not,' are mourned this Christmas-tide in a myriad homes from the Euxine to the Frozen Sea. 'Death for noble ends makes dying sweet.' The eyes of survivors are dim with tears, but the dead have not died in vain. Russia will be ennobled on the liberation of the Slavs.

' Ah, when the fight is won,
How nobler shall the sun
Flame in thy sky : how braver breathe thy air
That thou bredst children who for thee could dare
And die as thine have done.' "

On the 26th December Mr. Froude wrote :—

" Our Premier, unless he has been misrepresented, has dreamt of closing his political career with a transformation scene—Europe in flames behind him, and himself posing as harlequin before the footlights."

The following letter to Madame Novikoff, written by me in pencil at a railway station on Saturday, December 22, 1877, gives us a glimpse of the hopes and fears in the midst of which England spent the Christmas of 1877 :—

" I am seizing a moment to write to you once more before going to London. This morning I had letters from Goldwin Smith, Grenfell, Cox, Gladstone, Chamberlain, and Chesson. Gladstone is very kind. He said he is in doubt as to the when and the how of resistance, but he is quite sure that the anti-Turkish papers must sound the alarm, and prepare far and wide for vigorous resistance. Chamberlain says

Egypt will divide the Liberal party, and render war with France a danger. He says he has it direct from Waddington, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, that France would protest most strongly and only refrain from fighting now in order to fight better another time. Gladstone, Bright, and Lowe are dead against it. But there is universal consent that it would be *most* popular, as involving the abandonment of Turkey and the securing a new road to India.

“Grenfell says the Queen is quite *tête montée* about Russia and her Indian Empire, and that Germany is trying to do all she can to get our army to the East in order to have her hands free in the West.

“I had a long talk to-day with Joseph Cowen, M.P. for Newcastle, who is a terrible Turk. He said he did not think the Government meant anything by summoning Parliament in January. If they did, it meant Egypt, *not* war with Russia. He had seen Sir Stafford Northcote this week, and he did not leave on his mind the impression that anything serious was up. He said we *could* not fight, although he would like to, he hated Russians so much. But he said the feeling of the country, although not pro-Russian, was against war. But now good-bye. All is well; as Goadby, editor of the *York Herald*, says, ‘The country is rapidly swaying round to our side.’ Hurrah. Merry Christmas.
W. T. S.”

This is the text of the Gladstone letter referred to above :—

“*December 22, 1877.*

“MY DEAR SIR,—I thank you for your several notes, and I am sure you will believe that I receive and read them with sympathy, even when I cannot send a direct acknowledgment.

“On this occasion there may be difficulties in directing the when and the how of resistance; but I am confident that every non-Turkish paper will do well at once and constantly to sound the note of resistance to war or measures tending towards war, and to threaten a round and lively resistance North, South, East, and West.

“It is also, I think, not only allowable, but right and needful, to point distinctly and steadily to the Prime Minister as the root of all this mischief and scandal.—Yours faithfully, W. E. GLADSTONE.”

Writing on December 19 from Italy to Madame Novikoff, Mr. E. A. Freeman said :—

“PISA, *December 19, 1877.*

“You would have been well pleased to hear the shout which I gave when the news of Plevna came. But we are all afraid of two things: (1) Lest the Jew—may his face be confounded, but you will have seen that the Queen has gone ostentatiously to eat with him in his Ghetto—may still drag us into a war. (2) That you may make a peace which shall leave out the Greeks, and leave Constantinople as Derby desires it to remain.”

Writing two days later, Mr. Freeman in reply to a letter of mine said :—

“I am very glad you have seen Cox. There is a certain fiery indignation about him ready to consume any adversary, but it’s always on the right side.

“I am glad you met Dean Church, of all people. As for Froude, I cannot understand why he is on our side. The apologist of Henry VIII. and Flogging Fitzgerald ought to go in for Midhat and Chefket.

“The different relations of the mass of Noncon-

formists and the mass of so-called Christians is driving me Disestablishment-ward. I would purchase Christian St. Sophia at the expense of disendowing Canterbury."

The Stalwarts had anticipated Mr. Gladstone's advice as to sounding an alarm. The National Reform Union, the National Liberal Federation, the Eastern Question Association, the Peace Society, and many other business and religious organisations were hard at work. Everywhere they reported that the national sentiment was overwhelmingly in favour of neutrality. There was a strong anti-Russian sentiment, but the prevalent mood was a desire to keep out of the war.

Mr. Gladstone, addressing the Secretary of the Sheffield Liberal Association, December 24, said, "The end in view is to prevent the apprehended deviation from neutrality," and he laid great stress upon the importance of divesting the national protest of any party character. Towns' meetings were arranged for, Chambers of Commerce and Town Councils passed resolutions against any departure from neutrality. Mr. Maltman Barry's effort to counter a neutrality meeting in Trafalgar Square on December 29 by a pro-Turkish meeting resulted in a fiasco. On December 28 the Rev. Canon Malcolm MacColl sent Madame Novikoff the following reassuring report :—

"I hope the early summoning of Parliament will not induce anybody in Russia to think that England will go to war even if Russia goes to Constantinople—not, of course, to stay there. Lord Beaconsfield and the Queen would like war, but the country is dead opposed to it. The Liberals—and they are the majority in the country—will oppose it unanimously,

and the Tories are divided. Some of them are strongly opposed to war. No Government would live a week which ventured to go to war against Russia. Many even of our Philo-Turks would shrink from war. If Russia were to take the whole of Armenia, leaving European Turkey alone (except liberating Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria), England will not fire a shot. I have been attending meetings in the country lately, and I assure you the great mass of our population would not endure any Government which went to war against Russia."

It was not until Madame Novikoff had left England that Mr. Froude began to correspond with her regularly. The first of the long series of letters by which he kept her *au courant* with what was going on in London was dated New Year's Day 1878. She had written him in some alarm at the symptoms of a reviving Russophobia in England. He replied to her as follows :—

"DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—I do not wonder at the alarm which you expressed. I myself more than share it. Our people are weak as water, our politicians are still weaker. Every man has his price, and those on whom we thought that we might rely fail us at the moment of trial. My own hope is that your Government, by the prudence of its reply to Lord B., may put us diplomatically in the wrong. If they choose to say that the war was caused by the refusal of Turkey to listen to the advice of the Great Powers, and that as soon as Turkey signifies her readiness to submit to the Great Powers the war will cease and the Conference will be reassembled, England will then have no pretext for interference. Otherwise, the accursed intrigue which has been at work underground so long will be at last successful, and we must look out for

the worst consequences. Some of us will resist to the last ; but we shall fail. Is Bismarck possibly false ? Can it be that he wishes to embroil England and Russia, that he may carry out his own schemes with Holland and Belgium and Denmark ? Any way, the wound shows no sign of healing. May the prudence of the Tsar and Prince Gortschakoff prevent the catastrophe which otherwise I fear is inevitable. I wish I could comfort you with better news—but society in England is going mad, and at such times reason is useless and powerless.—Yours ever warmly,

“ J. A. FROUDE.”

Mr. Froude's letters during this period of anxiety and alarm were of great interest and of no small political value. They furnished Madame Novikoff with a valuable corrective of the somewhat optimist reports which she received from me. Mr. Froude, as he told her, had opportunities enjoyed by few outsiders of knowing how things went on inside the Cabinet—at least as long as Lord Carnarvon and Lord Derby remained Ministers of the Crown ; and even after they had resigned, they were able to divine better than most men as to how the battle raged between the advocates of peace and war in Downing Street. He lived in the West End of London, the very centre of Reaction ; whereas I wrote from Darlington, which in those days was the centre of the anti-Turkish propaganda. It is, however, somewhat surprising that, notwithstanding these differences of temperament and standpoint, her two constant correspondents agreed so well in their counsels.

On New Year's Day I sent a hurried note setting forth a somewhat less optimistic survey of the situation :—

“ But I do not lose heart. We will beat the devil yet. Never strike sail to a fear. No, no. Thank God! Better die than be a coward in such a cause. But remember it is a fight, and a trying one.”

On January 21, in order to be a means of communicating to the ear of Russia the voice of that true England which was opposed to Beaconsfield, I sent to the *Moscow Gazette* the following report upon the situation :—

“ The great masses of the English nation are decidedly in favour of peace, but it is hoped by the War party that Lord Beaconsfield may so contrive matters as to provoke the Russian Government into making a rough rejoinder. This would at once be represented as an insult to England, and every effort would be made to rouse the national pride, so as to induce the people to demand war. That demand would not have to be made twice. At present, however, the people are demanding peace, and will continue to do so as long as the Russian Government, avoiding the pitfalls dug for it by Lord Beaconsfield, courteously replies to all his communications, respects British interests, and manifests a cordial desire to cultivate British friendship. A single hasty word or rude dispatch might change everything, but at present the nation is determined to take no part in the war, and it depends upon the Russian Government whether this resolution to remain neutral shall remain unchanged.”

This note of alarm was strongly supported next day by another correspondent, who was believed to be in close touch with Lord Carnarvon and Lord Derby. He wrote :—

“ Lord Beaconsfield is confident he has a majority of the nation at his back, and the Peace party in the Cabinet fear he is right. Lord B.’s resolution is fixed as fate. ‘He intends to propose mediation and all the rest of these fooleries, in the hope,’ says my correspondent, ‘that Russia in her reply may touch English vanity, and then he will have the game in his own hands.’ He begs me to keep up a warning note, and use all my influence with the Northern Press to do the same. I have written to Gladstone, Bright, and Forster about it.”

On the other hand, I reported :—

“ I received a letter from Grenfell. He says the Conservatives have learned that they cannot go to war if they would, and that the great danger is not in the East but in the West. He also says that he anticipates the German scare replacing the Russian scare.”

It was odd that the journals which clamoured most vehemently that we should go to war with Russia were most positive as to the designs of Germany on Belgium.

On January 2 Lord Carnarvon made a pacific speech for which he was solemnly reprimanded by the Queen. From day to day we oscillated between hope and fear. One day I write :—

“ I have a letter from Mr. Mundella. He is gloomy. He says, ‘ Beaconsfield is gaining the ascendancy in the Cabinet, and that nothing but prompt protests can save us.’ We are going to protest. Towns’ meetings will be held in every large town in the country. I am writing to-night all round our districts to say, ‘ Up, and be Doing ! ’ We can depend upon

our friends. You will see that I was right. If only your Emperor will go on and avoid as carefully as he has done in the past any needlessly irritating remarks, if he will only renew his pledges, but insist that the Turk must be eliminated, then Beaconsfield will be foiled. I cannot too earnestly insist upon the fact that every mistake in temper Russia makes weakens our hands here. Every good, noble, chivalrous thing you do strengthens them."

The next day I report :—

"I have a letter from Mr. Grenfell. He says 'that an occupation of Gallipoli is intended, and will probably be assented to by all parties. But it is not a hostile occupation. It is temporary, as a material guarantee that you will get out of Constantinople after you get in.' I don't think you would object to that. What do you think? Tell me."

On January 4 a crowded and enthusiastic town's meeting was held at Darlington. I wrote :—

"We have never had such a meeting in Darlington. 'No British interests north of Egypt,' that was the cry. But mind, English people are queer, if you Russians are cheeky, if you do not give assurances that you will admit all the Powers to settle the future of Constantinople and the Dardanelles, if you are at all saucy, I would not answer for the consequences."

On the same day that Darlington was for the fourth time declaring against any support of the Turk, the horrifying possibility that all protests might be in vain sent Sir G. W. Cox nearly crazy. He wrote :—

"This vile despot who is striving to hound the people against Russia really makes one sick with

anxiety and indignation ; but what a craven set must be the men who, thinking like Carnarvon, Salisbury, and even Derby, can submit to hold an oar in the same boat with him.

“ Disraeli must be made to see that his act would bring instant and appalling misery on the land.

“ If such a war be made, I pray most earnestly that the sons of England may be covered with shame and humiliation. So long as England does what is right, I should wish her to be the first Power in the world : but there are higher things than any national interests ; and if she makes herself the accomplice of ruffians and murderers, I trust that she may receive a punishment which shall be a beacon in the sight of the world for many thousands of years.”

On the same day also Mr. Gladstone addressed the following letter to Madame Novikoff :—

“ HAWARDEN, *January 4, 1878.*

“ MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—I thank you for your letter of the 3rd. It finds me, with all my countrymen, again buffeted by the waves of uncertainty. Lord Carnarvon has been speaking the language of good sense to tranquillise the country which his chief had thrown into agitation. I refrain at present from public action, because I think my sharing in agitation is a great evil, only to be encountered for the sake of preventing some greater one.

“ Lord Beaconsfield’s late theatrical pranks and the sudden announcement of Parliament’s meeting on the 17th have shown that the country is *strongly* against war. Many because they are for the subject races and against the Turks : but also many who are *for the Turks, but not for going to war in their favour.* Under these circumstances I do not think Lord B.

will desist ; he will probably try some flank movement, some dodge. Till the war is over we cannot be at ease.

“ And now let me say to you what I shall say strongly when I have to speak in public. On the articles of the peace I have a divided opinion. I trust it will be a complete work as to the removal of Turkish Executive Power from Bulgaria—what I call *bag* and *baggage*, the German *sack* and *pack*—not the complicated, ineffective scheme of the Conference, which would have made everybody wretched and kept the sore wide open. *If* the arrangement for Bulgaria is weak, it will be said, and not unjustly, what Russia wants is to keep Turkey in trouble, that she may always have a plea for interference. Of the other Slav provinces I say nothing : *somebody* else means to work upon them : but do not forget glorious, immortal Montenegro. I am not a military critic : but Gourko seems to me to have effected the finest bit of strategy that the war has shown.

“ A happy New Year (old style) to you and yours, and may blessed Peace come back.—Yours sincerely,
“ W. E. G.

“ Without doubt the Turk is a brute, though a *brave* brute.”

On January 5 Mr. Forster made a speech to his constituents at Bradford by which he hurled defiance against the War party. I spent the next day with him at his home in Burley in Wharfedale, and was delighted at the uncompromising tone of his declarations. I reported to Madame Novikoff :—

“ Mr. Forster was most decisive. He told me that *by any and every means* he and those who act with him

will resist any war or any steps leading to war. Be quite sure that we will fight our Government as gallantly as your Russians fought the Turks at the Shipka."

I have quoted on a preceding page Mr. Freeman's expression of disgust at the pro-Turkish policy of many of the clergy. The Nonconformists during the whole of that prolonged crisis were Mr. Gladstone's prætorian guard. The Bishop of Oxford's letter dated January 7 was elicited by a vehement assertion that the clergy of the Establishment were promoting war for the Turks. The Bishop wrote :—

"I could wish that the Clergy were more entirely agreed in their hatred of war, and above all of such a war as is now proposed. But to say that they promote it, is an assertion which ought not to be made without very convincing proof. For my own part, I believe it to be untrue.

"If the Clergy are, as you suggest, too often influenced by their unwillingness to aid the Liberal party in their 'Liberationist' policy, you must remember that there is something to be said on their side. They observe that the idea of 'liberating religion from State control' has almost vanished; and that the policy now advocated is one of weakening and humiliating the Church as much as possible, for the sake of humiliating her. I can understand that the Clergy shrink from aiding the advocates of this policy.

"I am extremely sorry that they should suffer this consideration to weigh with them in their treatment of the great Eastern Question; but surely their opponents, who express hostility to the Church at such a crisis, are at least equally to blame.

"I trust, with all my heart, that the crime and calamity of a war will yet be averted from us."

On January 8 I reported to Madame Novikoff :—

"We are safe, safe—quite safe. Not, of course, if we go to sleep, but because we are awake we are safe. There is some talk of a dissolution. It will come to nothing. Beaconsfield is not such a fool as to shiver his majority to pieces for the Pashas. Everywhere the meetings are all for neutrality while you kill the Turkish Empire.

"So far we have had no opposition worth speaking of anywhere. We are sweeping all before us."

As a set-off, however, I had to tell her :—

"I had a very interesting missive from Froude, but he writes in a *very despondent mood*, finding 'English people weak, and English politicians more so.'"

Mr. Froude wrote again on the following day :—

"The danger is still as great as ever. Beaconsfield's reputation is at stake, and he knows it. He is not the man to sit down tamely."

On the same day Mr. Gladstone wrote to me from Hawarden :—

"MY DEAR SIR,—I read all you write to me with much interest, and watch the question of the East from day to day with close attention.

"I am glad to receive your account of Forster's reception. Also to be quite at one with him in this phase of the Eastern Question.

"I think the leaders of the party have done well not to come out as such. The manifestation has been

large enough to carry weight, and quite without party colour.

"There is a great force in reserve. Whatever happens, I hope the Russians will never fall back on the wretched proposals of the Conference about Bulgaria. On the other hand, I would not grudge the Turks a liberal tribute.

"*That* I regard as an incident of Bulgarian submission and acquiescence, which they ought contentedly to bear.

"This French inquiry and I suppose virtual expostulation has, in my view, been a perfect godsend.

"How admirably the *Times* has been writing.

"What you say of Mr. Chamberlain's machinery is important. But to send it to me is to pour water on sand. It should go in another channel: it appertains to party organisation. Why not write, *e.g.*, to Mr. Leeman?

"I often think how mischievous it may prove if lightly taken up and superficially worked.

"Wishing you all prosperity in your energetic exertions, I remain yours very faithfully,

"W. E. GLADSTONE."

Mr. Gladstone's remark about the Caucus was evoked by an observation of mine expressing fears lest the difficulty of getting the Liberal electors to attend the primaries might result in placing the party machine in the hands of the wire-pullers.

At last the War party decided that it would no longer do to let the anti-Turks have all the meetings to themselves. I reported (January 11):—

"There has been a great Turkophile meeting in St. James's Hall. All the Stafford House people were there, and it was a strictly private affair. . . .

The speeches will do good, as showing that there really is a War party."

On the same day Mr. H. R. Grenfell wrote me that the Cabinet was with Beaconsfield, not with Carnarvon, and that the policy of the Cabinet was to bully Russia into promising not to send her troops across the Maritza. It was a game of brag, and if it succeeded Beaconsfield would be held to have achieved a great success. If it failed—well, he did not say what then.

Madame Novikoff, overjoyed at receiving Mr. Gladstone's letter of January 4, containing so clear and definite a lead, promptly translated it into Russian, and published the substance of it in Moscow, writing to Mr. Gladstone to thank him for writing it, and saying how very useful it had been to the good cause.

I was most careful to report every piece of evidence that pointed towards danger. For instance, on January 12 I wrote :—

"The news to-day is not quite so good. At Oxford, at the Druids' Dinner, a 'Leading Liberal,' who appears to be a Turkophile, evoked loud cheers by declaring the honour and safety of England were at stake, and that England must insist upon having a voice in the settlement. At Bristol, too, the Mayor spoke about the 'utterly unnecessary and aggressive war,' and was cheered. Per contra, Birmingham and Leeds Town Councils have passed resolutions strongly condemning war. But you see it is difficult saying what course the nation will pursue. If it is doomed to be damned, it will go to war no matter what the odds ; and if it does go to war in this cause, it is doomed to be damned without a doubt."

The prospect, however, brightened daily. On January 14 Mr. Grenfell wrote :—

“Fortunately the expression of public opinion in favour of neutrality has done its work, and has convinced the Conservative wire-pullers that if Lord Beaconsfield were to dissolve on a war cry, Lord Beaconsfield would perpetrate an act of political suicide.”

Lord Beaconsfield had throughout been performing a sort of monkeyish imitation of Lord Palmerston. On the eve of the meeting of Parliament it was clear that the War party was beaten. The *Pall Mall Gazette*, which on December 20 confidently anticipated that the whole country, with the exception of a few fanatics, would accord Lord Beaconsfield an unhesitating support, on January 15 threw up the sponge. Wild with rage and desperate with disappointment, it raved savagely at the whole human race. “The manifestation from the country on behalf of a firm continuance of neutrality,” wrote Mr. Gladstone, “has been so wide and general that the danger ought for the present to have passed away.” I reported, “We have beaten the War party, hip and thigh, from Dan even to Beersheba.”

When Parliament met on January 17 it was evident that the meetings had done their work. England’s neutrality was not to be abandoned. The Peace party in the Cabinet was once more in the ascendant, and the Queen’s Speech bore witness to the practical capitulation of Lord Beaconsfield. The next day I reported :—

“As I telegraphed you yesterday, the Queen’s Speech is a great victory for us. The Government

has been compelled to declare categorically their allegiance to neutrality, to disclaim all connection with the war papers, and to generally profess their devotion to their old policy. *Believe me, there will be no fighting done by us*, against you, so long as you continue to be civil and carry out your holy mission of smashing the Turks, while respecting British interests as you have hitherto done."

I added :—

"I have a letter from Mr. Grenfell. He is much impressed with the danger from Germany. He believes that if we were to send an army to Gallipoli Germany would take Holland or attack France. I don't. Mr. Cartwright your friend does not."

Mr. Freeman from his distant eyrie in Palermo kept up a vigorous correspondence with both centres of the Anglo-Russian Intelligence Department. On January 15 he wrote to Madame Novikoff :—

"How is it that there is a victory exactly once a month, near the middle of the month? But I am getting dreadfully afraid of a patched-up peace, one which will leave the Turk standing and do nothing for the Greek lands. Depend upon it, that is bad policy in every way. It is easier to knock the Turk on the head for good and all now than it will be any other time when all the first steps will have to be taken over again. If any Christian land is left under the Turk, there will be the same story over again, Thessalian massacres instead of Bulgarian, as bad as before, or rather worse, because the whole devilry of the Circassians, Bashi-Bazouks, Highnesses, Excellencies, Pashas, Agas, Zaptiehs, and the rest of them, will leave the lands which are set free to go into the lands

which are left under the yoke, so that the last state of these lands shall be worse than the first. Cut down the tree, I say, now that it is half sawn through. Do beat all this into the heads of any one in power, if you see any way to do so."

To Darlington he wrote on the same day :—

" I really do not see how, in the teeth of such clear national feeling, the Jew himself could venture to go to war. But I do fear a premature peace, in the interests of the Slavs only, leaving out the Greeks. If Epirus, Thessaly, etc. etc., are left to the Turk, the Mussulmans out of the lands which are set free will flee thither, bringing with them seven devils worse than the first. Then there will be Thessalian atrocities, complications, conferences, and the whole thing over again, when it might be stopped for ever. Depend upon it, the Jew and his friends will turn every stone to keep as wide a space as they can where their friends may go on doing their devilries without let or hindrance. That will be their policy now, and they will call it 'mercy,' 'generosity,' etc. etc., to the Turk. That is Turkish cruelty to his victims. That is the point to insist on now, in all papers and at all meetings.

" How can anybody tell what the Jew means ? I should think, however, that the strong popular voice which has risen throughout England will have taught him by to-morrow that, if he does make war upon Russia, he will have to do it as the head of his own people, not of us."

Madame Novikoff wrote few letters in January. On the 19th, in reply to some reproach of mine, she replied shortly :—

“ There are moments in private as in political life when certain blame or approval lose all their importance. Russia has entered that stage now, and she is too covered with blood to pay attention to any Mrs. Grundy of any shape ! ”

Not very encouraging, but perhaps not unnatural under the circumstances.

On January 19 I wrote to Mr. Gladstone, asking whether, in view of the pacific assurances given by ministers, it might be well not to challenge a division on the proposed vote of six millions. I added :—

“ Madame Novikoff is in distress lest we should go to war, and I have told her, as delicately as possible, that if at any time there was any reassuring thing, or anything that ought to be insisted upon in Russia, I am in constant communication with you, and that I can secure it being conveyed to her, and through her to the Moscow Press, without *betraying your identity*.”

He wrote at once, and I sent Madame Novikoff at once a copy of his letter :—

“ *January 20, 1878.*

“ MY DEAR SIR,—It is little likely that you and I should differ on the Eastern Question in any phase of it, and nothing should be prejudged, but I must think that mere explanations cannot deprive military votes of their obnoxious character in certain cases, and though I would not absolutely engage to resist one, I think nothing is more improbable at present than the arrival of circumstances which would justify acquiescence.

“ I think I will undertake to blow the precedent of 1870 out of the water.

“ My hopes as to Russia, whose success seems assured, are—

“ 1. That she will make a clean job of the Slav redemption.

“ 2. Next, she will not be unkind to the Hellenes, to whom she is certainly under no obligations.

“ 3. That she will secure an ample recompense for good, gallant, glorious Montenegro.

“ 4. That she will seek her own compensation elsewhere, and not mar a glorious, immortal work by taking back the little Danubian bit of Bessarabia.

“ Pray write as much of this as you think proper.

“ I think the tone on our side in Parliament was good, and the others are a little cowed.—Yours faithfully,
W. E. G.

“ Please announce my being here till 30th (then Oxford) if circumstances allow.”

Two days later I received the following letter :—

“ MY DEAR SIR,—As the particulars in my last were named in order that you might communicate them if so disposed, I wish to say that they were not the terms of an ideal arrangement, but the *minima* of what seemed to me an admissible one. I also observe that to lay hold, in intention, on a spot in the entrance E. of Europe would be the very way to weaken us for operations in the W.—Faithfully yours,

“ W. E. G.”

The comfortable assurance that the War party was beaten did not last long. The Queen and Lord Beaconsfield were still said to be certain that if Russia could only be tempted or forced to attack Constantinople the game would be in their own hands. It was understood that the resignation of

Lord Carnarvon would be the signal of danger. A deputation of sixty Conservative members of Parliament waited upon Sir Stafford Northcote, urging the Government to intervene if the Russians approached Constantinople or Gallipoli. On the first days of the New Year the Russian armies had crossed the Balkans, and had reached Adrianople on January 20. Not until they were within a few days' march of Constantinople did the Jingoës make their last desperate rally.

CHAPTER V.

JINGOISM RAMPANT.

THE national protest against war on behalf of the Turks which checkmated Lord Beaconsfield in January was succeeded by an outburst of Jingoism which puzzled many, including Mr. Gladstone. It did not seem very rational to wait until the Turk as a fighting force was destroyed to clamour for war with the victorious Russians. But Jingoism is not a thing of reason. It is a kind of national delirium tremens. It was held in check in 1876-77 by the moral sense of the nation, which revolted against going to war for the sake of Turkey. Hence it was not until the Turks were cleared off the board that Jingoism had its chance.

It is difficult after the lapse of so many years to realise the intensity of the antipathies roused in England by the war in the East. A strange air of unreality lingers around the records of the utterances of those stormy days. It seems nowadays almost incredible that men otherwise clothed and in their right mind should have worked themselves up into a frenzy of passionate sympathy for the Sultan of Stamboul, should have identified the Ottoman with the British Empire, and should have regarded every friend of Russia as a traitor to England.

I had written to Mr. Mundella complaining of the action, or the inaction, of the Eastern Question Association. He replied on December 29 that they

had acted on the best advice obtainable. He then went on to say :—

“ I consider that we have forced the hand of the Government. They have prevailed on the Turk to place himself in their hands. Now comes the beginning of mischief. You can easily see how they may provoke a rebuff, represent it as an insult to this country, and push us into war. You may be assured that, if the Russians behave half as cavalierly as the Turks did at the Conference, *war* will be deemed requisite for the honour of the country. . . .

“ I know too well the astute and mischievous scoundrel we have to cope with. He is full of adroitness and resource, and if foiled, will declare he meant peace all along ; but he is doing all that he can to embroil us in war, and is utterly distrusted by those who know him best.”

I told Madame Novikoff on December 19 I had written the previous day to about thirty or forty thoroughgoing anti-Turks, warning them of danger and urging them to be prepared to spring like a rat trap the moment the Government showed its hand for war. It was the kind of thing I was always doing in those days, and whenever I rested for a moment, I would be spurred into action by some such letter as this, which Mr. Freeman, Sir G. W. Cox, and others, were constantly writing me :—

“ It is to you and the local Press that we must look for any good, only each must say the same thing in its own place. The cockneys cannot be made to understand anything out of their own big ugly town, the place in all England which does least good.”

Of the replies which I received to this batch of

appeals I will only quote two, the first a most characteristic note from Dr. Temple, who died as Archbishop of Canterbury, but who, when Headmaster of Rugby, extorted from the boys the tribute, "A beast—but a just beast":—

"The Bishop of Exeter is much obliged by the caution given to him by the Editor of the *Northern Echo*. The Bishop will be prepared to act with the Liberal party, to prevent any such mischief as an attempt to involve this country in war on behalf of Turkey."

The other was a shrewd, sensible note from the then Duke of Argyll, who, after Mr. Gladstone, was the best anti-Turk in Parliament. He wrote from Inveraray on December 19:—

"I do not know that I can say I have 'confidence' in the Cabinet not doing anything to involve war; but I don't think it probable they will do so. Everything is against it. All the other Powers hostile to such a course—and (to say the least) a very divided public opinion at Home. The danger is of steps not really involving war, but involving encouragement to Turkey—and undignified demonstration."

As we read over the savage diatribes hurled against Mr. Gladstone and all his supporters, it seems as if we were listening to the mouthings of Bedlam and the morals of Broadmoor. But in those days the West End clubs and the music halls regarded such utterances as patriotic. And newspapers with the influence of huge circulation swelled the passionate clamour for war.

When I had the privilege of going through the

Gladstonian correspondence of that period, nothing supplied so lurid a picture of the bestial savagery that was let loose in England at that prolonged crisis as the bundles of postcards which used to reach the Gladstone family all day long, the bulk arriving at the breakfast table. These missives, couched in every phrase of studied brutality, were sent as often as not to Mrs. Gladstone by writers who professed to be ardent patriots and who at least possessed sufficient education to read and write. One favourite form of insult was to copy out stories of outrages alleged by the Turkish Press to have been committed by Cossacks upon women and children, and to append to it a fervent wish that Mr. Gladstone's wife and daughters might speedily be subjected to the same extremity of suffering. Others were not content with desiring the infliction of the penalties for high treason upon the greatest of English statesmen; these Yahoos of the postcard exulted in the certainty of his consignment to the flames of eternal hell. For filth, savagery, and bestiality I have never seen any collection of letters so appalling as these utterances of 1877-78. "If you raked hell with a small-tooth comb," to quote a rough Sheffield phrase, "you would not find worse things than these."

The patriots did not confine themselves to vituperative postcards. They threw dead cats at Mr. Bradlaugh, they smashed Mr. Gladstone's windows, and by organised violence they succeeded in suppressing the right of public meeting and free speech in certain areas. And during this saturnalia of violence and brutality they were firmly persuaded that they were displaying the loftiest patriotism and that all who demurred to these violent demonstrations in favour of war were traitors of the blackest dye. They were

firmly convinced that they were supporting the policy of the Prime Minister and that they were maintaining the traditional policy of Great Britain. Journals boasting the largest circulation in the world, journals claiming to represent the culture of the capital, and journals professing to be in touch with the mind of the Prime Minister,—all were insistent for war.

As the French Revolution found Rouget de Lisle to chant the war-song of the Marseillaise, "who knew how to die," so the pro-Turkish frenzy of 1877-78 produced its Tyrtæus in the person of Macdermott of the music halls, whose ever-memorable war-song has given its name to a great section of British opinion. Not even the sonorous note of the refrain, "Aux armes, Aux armes," more accurately expressed the mood of the moment than did the Jingo song the madness of that crazy time. The verses of the Macdermott have perished in oblivion; the chorus is enshrined in history like a fly in amber:—

" We don't want to fight,
But by Jingo if we do,
We've got the ships, we've got the men,
We've got the money too.
We've fought the Bear before,
And if we're Britons true,
The Russians shall not have Constantinople."

" We don't want to fight " was yelled as the war-cry of drunken mobs who broke up meetings summoned to protest against war. As a matter of fact, we had neither the ships nor the men to embark upon a great European war, and from the outset there never had been any question of Russia having Constantinople. But alike in its false assertions, its inaccurate statements, and its irrelevant conclusion, it was thoroughly characteristic of the Jingo party. It

was a doggerel condensation of a thousand leading articles; a rough, crude, vulgar expression of the unregenerate old Adam latent in John Bull.

The Conservative Press as a rule denounced Mr. Gladstone even when they did not directly advocate war with Russia. But there were many newspapers, such as the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Morning Post*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Vanity Fair*, and society papers generally, which raged furiously in favour of what they believed was Lord Beaconsfield's policy of war. In the Cabinet, ministers were divided; Lord Salisbury, Lord Derby, and Lord Carnarvon being popularly credited with the responsibility for putting a veto upon the bellicose proclivities of their chief. After the Cabinet declared itself in favour of neutrality—tempered by the presence of British officers in the Turkish army and navy—the party papers shrank from openly demanding intervention on behalf of the Turks. But some of the more independent Conservative papers ceased not to cry aloud day and night in favour of war. Of these, *Vanity Fair*, then the organ of Mr. Thomas Gibson Bowles, was most clamant. Week after week it wrote in this fashion:—

“ There never was such an occasion as the present. Humanly speaking, such another will never occur again.

“ Let no man deceive himself or be deluded by rumours of peace. There can be no peace, no security, not alone for Turkey, but for England, France, Austria, Holland, Sweden, or others, until Russia be put back, until her stolen provinces be redistributed and the arms lopped from off the octopus of St. Petersburg.

“ The Crimea must return to Turkey, the Caspian provinces to Persia, Finland to Sweden, the Caucasus must recover its independence, Turkey must be paid

a war indemnity, and then for a time the world may be at peace."

The Queen had telegraphed to the Tsar, transmitting the desire of the Turks for an honourable peace. The Tsar was reported to have replied that if Lord Beaconsfield ceased encouraging the Turks to resist, the chief obstacle in the way of peace would disappear.

The friends of the Turks, with Lord Beaconsfield at their head, became more and more restless as the Russian forces approached Constantinople. The passage of the Balkans began the day after Christmas, and from New Year's Day till January 20, when the Russians occupied Adrianople, there had been a series of efforts to stay their advance. First it was concerted intervention, which was vetoed by Germany and Austria, then it was British mediation, then proposals for an armistice. The Russian armies, after being dammed up for months before the fortifications of Plevna, now spread like a spring flood over Southern Bulgaria. Wild rumours were circulated as to the determination of the Russians to rush Constantinople and to seize Gallipoli. Lord Derby and Prince Gortschakoff exchanged dispatches on the subject in which the British thrust was skilfully met by the Russian parry. The British Government, which had been informed at the opening of the war what in substance would be the Russian terms of peace, professed to be sorely exercised in spirit by the delay that ensued ere the actual terms of peace were laid before the Turkish plenipotentiaries. There was everywhere feverish excitement. Even Mr. Gladstone was sufficiently under the influence of the prevailing mood to devote himself to discussing

"The Peace to Come," an article published by the *Nineteenth Century* for February, which was much more anti-Russian in parts than might have been expected from previous utterances of its author.

On January 24 Mr. Chamberlain telegraphed me the news of Lord Carnarvon's resignation, which I at once telegraphed on to Moscow. It was reported that Lord Derby and Lord Salisbury had also resigned, and the wildest rumours were greedily swallowed. Lord Carnarvon had resigned because of the orders given to the British fleet to proceed to Constantinople, and because it was decided to demand a vote of six millions for military and naval preparations. In the midst of the excitement, Mr. Gladstone found time to write to Madame Novikoff as follows :—

"January 25, 1878.

"MY DEAR MME NOVIKOFF,—I cannot wonder that you made use of the material of my letters (without the name, as I understand) for such a purpose as you describe. Only, as the fact is very likely to become known, I would ask of you one favour, that you would kindly send me a copy of the letter to provide for the case of my being challenged as to its contents. When your letter of the 17th reached me, I had just been busily engaged in writing an article for the *Nineteenth Century* just coming out, entitled 'The Peace to Come,' for the purpose of leading English opinion, as far as I could, in the direction of a good peace and away from a bad one. I have all along looked upon this as a very serious danger, and I fear that the influence of the English Government has all tended to bring about a bad peace, by driving you into the arms of Austria, and thus strengthening the influence she is likely to devise against the liberties

of the Slav provinces. However, let us trust in God, Who has done so much for them.

“My date will perhaps have sufficiently shown you that I am on my way to London in all haste, by reason of the proposal which the Government mean to make on Monday. I look upon it as being, however explained, a very bad proposal. I do not think anything is *likely* to be said which could induce me to support it; and, according to our present information, I do not expect that it will be agreeable to the country.—Believe me sincerely yours,

“W. E. GLADSTONE.”

Madame Novikoff's letters during January give a lively picture of the state of indignant alarm in which the manœuvres of Lord Beaconsfield kept the Russians. On January 26 she wrote :—

“We are puzzled beyond measure by all that is done of late by the English Government. For Heaven's sake give us some key to all these riddles! We live in the midst of feverish excitement. Expecting the worst, we are compelled to take precautions. Already for spring there are ordered great military preparations. More sacrifices, more lives, more treasure! Well, so be it, if it must be so. We will not, we dare not, shrink from obeying the voice of duty, but my heart sinks within me when I think that our two nations may very shortly be at war.

“England, it is said by every one here, treats us like children, threatening to go to war with us at every moment. Why should she interfere to prevent us finishing our work properly? Put yourself in our place. If all England were one vast ambulance, if there were not a town or a village which had not its wounded to watch and its dead to lament, perhaps



Photograph by W. & D. Downey]

[57-61 Ebury Street, London, S.W.

THE EARL OF GRANVILLE.
Three times British Foreign Minister.

even your Queen might be as determined as our Emperor not to sacrifice the sacrifices of his people by consenting to a shameful peace that left unre-moved the causes of the war."

We did the best we could to reassure her. I wrote in response to these and similar wrathful out-pourings :—

"If you are reasonably moderate, and confine yourselves to excluding the Turks from the largest possible area, we shan't fight. Believe me, everything depends on you. Hitherto you have behaved admirably. Continue to do so, and you are safe and Lord Beaconsfield is smashed. Lose your temper, and Lord Beaconsfield is triumphant. I am ashamed, as an Englishman, to admit that it is only the superior patience and good sense of Russia that saves the world from a war which our Premier attempts to provoke. But shame or no shame, it is a fact, and I recognise facts."

On January 27 the Government demanded a vote of six millions for military and naval preparations. On the 31st Mr. Forster moved an amendment, to which Lord Hartington, and the Whigs who followed him, reluctantly assented. On the previous day, Lord Granville informed Mr. Gladstone that "Dizzy has been using the most violent language, telling the Ambassadors that he is desirous of peace, but that his hand will be forced by the national feeling, and that he will have to land 300,000 men in Turkey."¹

On February 1 Madame Novikoff wrote :—

"No words can give you the slightest idea of

¹ *Life of Lord Granville*, vol. ii. p. 172.

what I suffered these days. I could neither think nor sleep. I felt again the torture which came over me when I heard of Nicholas's death. But we have not deserted our duty. You will not have to be ashamed of your Russian sympathies; the Slavs are not abandoned, happen what may—should even England declare war against us. Gladstone's letter was a real godsend. *He is the only man here really esteemed.* It is *not printed whom the letter is addressed to.* It has been wonderfully useful, but I should not have even served the cause I would willingly give my life for (a very poor gift indeed!) if I had not remembered what Gladstone told me *in your presence*, that he never wrote to me *anything which* he was not prepared to see in print. Don't you remember that? Tell me, do! have I been dreaming?"

I replied for her consolation :—

"It is perfectly true that Mr. Gladstone, in my presence and that of others, said he had no objection to the publication of all the letters he ever wrote on the Eastern Question to you in particular, or to the rest of the world in general. And that, of course, abundantly covers your act."

In Great Britain a new series of public meetings was being held to denounce the war vote. But at last, the Turks being out of the way, the Conservatives and anti-Russians began to feel that it was safe to hold public meetings in support of the Government. A neutrality meeting, summoned at Cannon Street on the day Mr. Forster moved his amendment, was swamped by the Jingoese, who adjourned to the Guildhall, and passed a vote of confidence in the

Ministry. On February 1 there was another meeting in the City, this time of merchants on the Corn Exchange also in favour of the Government. These City gatherings, which were carefully got up by the War party, were eagerly hailed by the Jingoese, as completely effacing the innumerable meetings held on the other side. The effect they produced was deepened by assemblies held in Sheffield, Portsmouth, Woolwich, Colchester, and other places financially interested in increased war expenditure. Most of these meetings were more or less tumultuous assemblies of rowdy mobs, and the bellowing of "Rule Britannia" and Macdermott's war-song was much more audible than more articulate arguments.

Newspaper correspondents, under the influence of London excitement, exaggerated these manifestations of warlike enthusiasm. On the 4th Madame Novikoff telegraphed for an explanation of the situation. She wrote :—

"Monday, February 4, 1878.

"I am much distressed. Telegrams from London, published by all our yesterday's papers, announce that 'Ten millions are granted by the nation,' and that there are strong demonstrations in 'favour of war.' What does all this mean?"

I replied :—

"The war vote or subsidy, as you call it, is not intended to enable England to help the Turks. The Ministry have been explicit enough on that point. It is a piece of vulgar, ostentatious braggadocio, worthy of the minister who suggested the Imperial title for the Queen, in order to retard Russian progress in Central Asia. I cannot too earnestly impress upon you

that the very completeness of your success removes the one great safeguard against England's attacking you. If the Turk were still a possible ally, we could always prevent a war against Russia by protesting against war for the Turks; but the Turk is gone, and Russia and England are face to face. I do not believe there will be war. But the situation—*after* the Conference—will be dangerous. Until the Conference there is no danger. English people are mad as their bulls when they see a red rag.

“Another element, which has not hitherto been taken into account, is the sudden ebullition of popular feeling in favour of the Government, not because it is anti-Russian or pro-Turk, but because it is the Government. Men say ‘it must be supported in the crisis. They cannot help the Turks; they are Englishmen—except the Jew Premier; it is unpatriotic to embarrass them, to refuse them supplies, so let them lead the country to the devil, if need be.’ These cries have much weight, and when applied with a liberal allowance of torchlight processions, brass bands, bonfires, beer, and ‘Rule Britannia,’ produce demonstrations of confidence in the Government which are undoubtedly a serious sign. It is no longer a question of Russian or Turk, it is Russian or English, and the issue is no longer in doubt. Even this six million vote, a vulgar piece of display, has secured the support of your old friend, Mr. Villiers, brother of the Earl of Clarendon. So the Tories are exultant, and the Liberals are badly divided. They may vote tolerably solid, but now that the Turk is out of the way, they will gravitate more and more to the Government.”

Mr. Gladstone spoke vigorously against the Vote

of Credit, and on the next day sent me the following letter, which, from its caution against a translated translation, was obviously sent for transmission to Moscow:—

“ 73 HARLEY STREET,
February 5, 1878.

“ MY DEAR SIR,—We tread upon eggs. We walk upon quicksands. In what we hear from Russia, who knows whether it is or is not *their* War party whose voice reaches us? It may be as bad as our War party; worse it cannot be. Such has been the stirring up of the coarsest and rankest material among us that it will take long to purify the air.

“ I am not, however, much afraid of war. I am more afraid of a conspiracy with Austria to keep down as far as may be the liberties of the subject races of Turkey. It is hard to expect the Russians to be much more civilised and advanced than we are as represented by our Government. Nevertheless, though we wrongly objected to a *military* occupation of Constantinople for the purposes of the war, I *hope* that they will not in contrariety to the spirit, perhaps the letter, of Prince Gortschakoff's of December 16, take anything like a military possession of it, even for a moment.

“ I hope also they will not press for any part of the banks of the Danube.

“ As to the Straits, their attitude is so well and safely defined that I think all danger is remote and can only be brought near by gross misconduct.

“ As to compensation, she has Armenia open—and for the Christians they seem thus far to have done well.

“ If she can in this supreme moment of her history, when she has been doing a great work of duty, still

make the voice of duty her law, and prefer flame to flash, her position will be magnificent.

"You are quite at liberty to make known what I have written; but under no circumstances ought it to be published with my name, and so put through the ordeal of a translated translation.

"I wish we knew the exact terms. All reserve is subjected to the worst interpretations.

"Unhappily I forgot last night to utter a warning voice about Austria, which I fully intended. She ought to be most jealously watched. I intend, if need be, to *work* that branch of the subject.—Yours faithfully,
W. E. GLADSTONE."

On the question of occupying Constantinople Madame Novikoff wrote in 1880:—

"Last year General Grant, the American ex-President, called on me in Paris. Almost the first thing he asked was, 'Can you explain how it happened that the Russians did not occupy Constantinople when they had it entirely in their hands?'

"'Alas!' I replied, 'I have no good explanation to give. We in Moscow never expected such a voluntary abdication of power. In fact, some of our military people telegraphed from Turkey to Moscow saying, "To-morrow Constantinople will be occupied for several days!" It is difficult to give you an idea of the disappointment throughout all Russia when it was found out that Constantinople, after all, was not to be the place where we were to dictate peace. The general conviction in Russia is that our Government, misled by news from abroad, telegraphed orders to our General-in-Chief, the Grand Duke Nicholas, not to advance.'

"General Grant, who was listening attentively,

smiled and said, 'Well, I can only say one thing: had I been your Commander-in-Chief, I would have put the order in my pocket, and opened it at Constantinople three or four days later.'

" 'Yes,' I rejoined, 'it was a great trial for our national feelings, and we feel sure that nobody on earth will ever thank us for that unnecessary concession.'

" The same day I dined with M. Emile de Girardin, where several eminent guests were assembled. I repeated General Grant's conversation. 'Are you surprised at his remarks?' says M. de Girardin. 'It's unnecessary to say how little we liked the German promenade through Paris, but we understood, nevertheless, that the German Government could not deprive its troops of so legitimate a satisfaction.' I heard, on very good authority, that Prince Bismarck, on learning that Russia, after all, was not going to occupy Constantinople, exclaimed with rather an uncomplimentary emphasis, 'Nein, mit den Leuten ist nichts anzufangen!' (No, there is no doing anything with those people!). The German Chancellor in his heart of hearts was naturally pleased with every mistake on our part, but as a good political chess-player, he felt impatient at anybody taking a wrong step."¹

On February 7 an anonymous telegram, announcing that the Russians were in Constantinople, gave rise to a wild outburst of Jingo delirium in London, accompanied by a panic on the Stock Exchange. Sir A. H. Layard, our Ambassador at Constantinople, telegraphed the Foreign Office that "in spite of the Armistice, the Russians were advancing in force upon

¹ *Russia and England*, pp. 241-242.

Constantinople." As a matter of fact, what had happened was that, in accordance with the terms of the Armistice, the Russians were advancing to occupy the Tcheckmedge lines, thirty miles distant from Constantinople. The correction, however, arrived too late to arrest the panic. Count Schouvaloff was reported to have said, "Nous sommes dedans," or we have been deceived; which Londoners, translating with dictionary aid, believed to be an admission that Russia was inside Constantinople. Writing to explain what had happened, I told Madame Novikoff:—

"The withdrawal of Forster's amendment was inevitable, thanks to Layard and Schouvaloff. If they were both tied back to back and pitched into the Bosphorus! Later . . . Thank God the danger is passed now. The Vote is agreed to, but the Government gave most satisfactory assurances they will not spend it at all if they can help, and they will seek solely to free the Christians, open the Dardanelles to the commerce of all nations, and to safeguard Egypt."

Mr. Froude did not use such a literary bludgeon as Mr. Freeman, but his estimate of the Prime Minister was not the less severe, even though he did not call him names. I quote two of his letters written prior to the Ministerial surrender of May 30:—

"*February 10, 1878.*

"MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—You will have seen that I had reason for the unpleasant account of things which I sent you three weeks ago. The firmest friend of peace in the Cabinet (Lord Carnarvon) was obliged to resign, and we have been within a hair's breadth of war. As I did not take an encouraging view of the situation before, you may be inclined to

give me more credit when I tell you that for the present I think the danger is past, and that, unless some untoward accident occurs, it will not return. . . . It was inevitable that there would be a moment of panic in England when the Turkish power of resistance broke down, and when it became evident that the old state of things which we had so long supported was irrevocably gone. . . . The War party in the Government, who felt that the defeat of Turkey was a defeat to themselves and the destruction of their policy, took advantage of the alarm. . . . It was their last hope to escape disgrace. For many days I could not tell how it would be. If the Fleet had gone up to Constantinople when first ordered there a fortnight since, the Porte might have refused to submit, and war would probably have followed between Russia and England. The Turkish war is over. The sending up the Fleet now is not a hostile move against you, but only a natural precaution, to which you will not object, while it allays the excitement of our people and soothes their ruffled vanity. Now I hope all will be quiet till the meeting of the Conference. We shall not have our blood excited by daily reports of battles and defeats of our friends. . . . We shall cool down and think rationally, and the matter will then be settled without further quarrelling. This is my present opinion, to which you will not attach more weight than properly belongs to it. At the same time, any unfortunate accident may set us on fire again. The Ministry are sore at the results of their own mistakes. The country is dimly conscious that it does not stand in a creditable position, and so is irritable. I merely mean that I have better hopes now than I have had at any time during the last eighteen months that the Eastern Question can

be settled without a war between us and you. The mob at all times and in all countries are ready to clamour for fighting whenever there is a chance, and when once the clamour begins quiet people cannot be heard. But I bid you hope, and remain yours truly,
J. A. FROUDE."

Madame Novikoff had written to Mr. Gladstone sending him an explanation of the reasons which led her to publish his previous letter in Moscow, and the justification he had afforded her for regarding his letters to her as written for publication. Mr. Gladstone replied as follows three days after the Vote of Credit had been carried by 328 votes to 124—Lord Hartington, Mr. Forster, and others walking out of the House :—

"73 HARLEY STREET,
February 11, 1878.

"MY DEAR MME NOVIKOFF,—Many thanks for the letter. Do not suppose I meant to blame you. You are quite right in saying that I have no desire to conceal any of the *opinions* contained in any of the letters I have written to you. But the inconvenience of publishing a letter bodily is that it undergoes translation and retranslation, and still is taken to be, when it comes back here in England, an authentic expression of my thoughts—which, of course, it is not.

"But this is too small a matter to dwell upon amid the great events and, upon the whole, the glorious events of the day.

"Down to the present day, as far as I can see, all your engagements to us have been skilfully but honourably kept. I know not what is to become of the imbroglio which may have arisen if, as is reported

to-day, the Turks have refused the British vessels leave to proceed up the Dardanelles.

"I have done my best against the Vote for six millions—a foolish and mischievous proposition. The Liberal leaders, as I think, shrank at the last moment from voting. But my opinion is, that the Liberal party in general are firmly opposed to the Vote as a silly, misleading, and mischievous measure.

"Meanwhile, the language of the Government improves. It not only grows more peaceful but more favourable to the great emancipation which you, by your blood and treasure, have worked out. I shall still look out with the utmost jealousy for any signs here of disposition to fall in with an Austrian policy, such as I feel it may be, and to curtail any portion of the boon which Turkey may, under your influence, have agreed to give. Should this seem likely to be realised, I must endeavour to show the true character of the foreign policy of Austria.

"I rejoice—

"That Vienna is rejected as the place of the Conference :

"That the pledge as to Constantinople has been redeemed :

"That you have obtained a real and not a Conference Emancipation of Bulgaria :

"That you have at once restored the course of trade.

"I grieve if you press against gallant Roumania the demand for the bit of Bessarabia. In an immense glory there is no room for great minds to feel mortification ; and the glory which the sacrifices of Russia have done so much to give you *is* immense.

"Illness (for I have only attended in Parliament with effort) prevented an earlier reply.—Yours sincerely,

W. E. GLADSTONE."

Despite the Liberal split and the Layard-begotten panic, there was a more comfortable feeling in the country.

Mr. Forster wrote me: "It is well to urge moderation on your Moscow friends, but I cannot say I seriously fear war."

Even so uncompromising a Crusader as Sir G. W. Cox wrote on February 12:—

"Seriously, I hope and even think that things are going on well. I should rejoice indeed if we could bring about a hearty alliance and friendship between the *peoples* of Russia and of England. That would be the cure of almost all the evils under which Europe is labouring, but Beaconsfield and the Tories would move heaven and earth to prevent such an issue. Still, it is a bright vision to which we may look forward in the future."

It was but a momentary calm. The very next day the crisis revived. The cause this time was the renewal of the attempt to force the British fleet through the Dardanelles. The record of the successive advances and retreats of the fleet under Admiral Hornby's command would have been farcical if it had not been laden with such tragic possibilities of conflict. It was ordered to go to Constantinople January 23, and ordered back to Besika Bay the next day. The day after it was ordered to the Dardanelles, and again recalled to Besika Bay. On February 7 it was again ordered to Constantinople, only to be blocked by the refusal of the Turks to grant a firman authorising its passage.

On the 13th it finally forced its way through the Straits in face of the Turkish protest and the plain intimation by Prince Gortschakoff that as the British

fleet had been sent to protect British residents, the Russians deemed it their duty to direct the entry of a portion of the Russian troops into Constantinople to protect those Christians whose life and property might be threatened. The crisis became acute. Lord Derby sent a dispatch, described in some quarters as an ultimatum, protesting against Prince Gortschakoff's plea that the same pretext which justified the presence of the British fleet in the Sea of Marmora might justify a Russian occupation of Constantinople. Finally, on February 18, a compromise was agreed to by which the British ships withdrew thirty-five miles from Constantinople, which was about the same distance as the Russian advanced post on the Tcheck-medje lines.

I made the best I could of the incident, and told Madame Novikoff: "The sending of the fleet was a godsend for Prince Gortschakoff. The very best thing that could have happened for your wily old diplomat."

Madame Novikoff was much too wroth to be appeased by the recognition of a diplomatic victory. On February 22 she wrote :—

"The sending of the British men of *war*, in spite of the Sultan's opposition, is not only a breach of neutrality and an evident abolition of the Treaty of Paris, it is a very open demonstration against Russia. Had our Government been more energetic, had it listened once more to the unanimous wish of the country,—instead of sending stupid warnings,—the only step rational and dignified was to occupy Constantinople at once, without absurd twaddle and loss of time. We have been foolishly condescending. It is provoking that we should humiliate ourselves

for the good pleasure of Lord Beaconsfield. Well, if England tolerates a man like this as its principal representative, it's a matter of taste. Our views of national duties evidently are not the same. The indignation here is very great with England. Which is not to be wondered at ! ”

The publication of the Russian terms of peace on February 9 led to a revival of the anti-Russian agitation. I reported :—

“ Your terms of peace have created a bad impression both here and in Paris. Mine is almost a single solitary voice raised in defence. My article is unique in being, so far as I can see, the one solitary plea for your moderation. I regret that you did not throttle the Turkish Empire altogether.”

Mr. Gladstone was offended by the proposed retrocession of the strip of Bessarabia, and he liberated his soul in an article in the March *Nineteenth Century*. I wrote to Madame Novikoff :—

“ You know how anxious Mr. Gladstone is to be friends with you Russians. If he can speak so strongly, imagine how bitterly the demand for the retrocession of Bessarabia is commented upon by your—nay, our enemies ; because those who desire to create a blood feud between England and Russia are not less our enemies than yours.”

Mr. Gladstone wrote the same day, sending her a copy of the article :—

“ *February 27, 1878.*

“ MY DEAR MME NOVIKOFF,—I send you here-with my latest utterance from the *Nineteenth Century* for March, of which I have just received a copy. . . .

"It was written before the rumours now current of the terms of peace had gone abroad.

"I think it unlikely that these rumours should be accurate in all points. I cannot, for example, believe what they state about the Egyptian or the Bulgarian tributes. In some points I can well believe that they stipulated for more than Russia means to have, and that those stipulations are the intended means of keeping Turkey by her side during the Conference. At any legitimate measure for such a purpose I for one could not wonder. Well, I have had two sheets of glass in my windows broken by people in one part of a mob, another part of which went to present an address of confidence and congratulation to Lord Beaconsfield, last Sunday in Downing Street.

"I do not believe the poor fools had the least idea of reasons or of objects. Another party had passed just before. Such things, I need not tell you, do not affect me. I have seen my way clearly in this business, and have endeavoured to walk in it sturdily. We may still have difficulties ahead; but, thank God, the abhorred and shameful past cannot be restored.—
Always sincerely yours, W. E. GLADSTONE."

The episode to which Mr. Gladstone alluded is thus described in his Diary:—

"February 24 (Sunday), between four and six, three parties of the populace arrived here—the first with cheers, the two others hostile. Windows were broken and much hooting. The last detachment was only kept away by mounted police in line across the street, both ways. This is not very Sabbatical. There is strange work behind the curtain, if one could

only get at it. The instigators are those really guilty; no one can wonder at the tools."

This was not the only incident of the kind. The following Sunday there was another entry in his Diary to this effect :—

"Another gathering of people was held off by the police. I walked down with C., and a large crowd gathered, though in the main friendly. We went into Dr. Clark's, and then in a hansom off the ground."¹

Bessarabia was a sore point. Madame Novikoff frankly expressed her sympathy with the demand for its retrocession. She wrote :—

"For my part, I should be happy if Russia took nothing whatever for herself—no part of Armenia, or anything. But I should like her to get Bessarabia, if only to give it up at once. I understand the craving for abolishing every trace of the Crimean War. England prevented Greece from joining us. If poor George had disobeyed Lord Beaconsfield, Epirus and Thessaly would belong to him now. I, and not I alone, still desire Russia to forgive and forget and to give every support she can."

Mr. Freeman writes from Palermo, March 3 :—

"What a fearful mess Hartington and Forster made of the six million business. It is perfectly plain that, if any good is to be done, Gladstone must, will he, nill he, be brought back to the Lead.

"Things are getting more puzzling than ever. I don't like Russia asking for money and for that bit of Roumania. She should take the Turkish fleet, which would leave Greece free to act, and any amount of

¹ Morley's *Gladstone*, vol. ii. p. 574.

non-Greek territory in Asia ; but not money, because the Turk can get that only by fresh oppressions. Then the Bulgarian frontier should be watched, in the interests of Greece, which are, oddly enough, in some sort represented by the Turk. I don't mind giving Bulgaria an outlet to the Ægean, as there is not the least objection to the Greek territory lying in detached bits, as the main communication must always be by water. Let the Greeks have Constantinople and Hadrianople and the Bulgarian Thessalonica."

On the same date, in the course of a long letter, Mr. Kinglake writes to remind her of a conversation she had forgotten :—

" I hope you thought of me, Miss, when you found the ' Port of Batoum ' coming to the front. I remember when you began your crusading, you were horrified at my speaking of the Port of Batoum, but I knew more, you see, of Petersburg than you did, Miss Moscow. New policies will, I suppose, be gradually springing out of the present condition of things, and apparently it may become the interest of Russia to send Moscow to Siberia and support the Sultan with all her might ; because without him she loses her *raison d'être* in the Balkan Peninsula."

While people were gossiping about the terms of peace, the negotiations between the Grand Duke Nicholas and the Turks, which had been dragging on ever since the Russians entered Adrianople, were brought to a close by the signature of the Treaty of Peace at San Stefano on March 3, 1878. It was a day memorable in the history of civilisation. Russia had done her work. Bulgaria, united and free, from the Danube to the Ægean, was liberated by the

Russian sword. We were now to see the beginning of a new conflict, which after three months was to result in the undoing of the emancipating work of Russia in Macedonia as the solitary triumph of British diplomacy.

Madame Novikoff, as ever giving faithful expression to the views of the stalwart patriots of Moscow, was by no means content. She wrote :—

“ We are not particularly satisfied with the San Stefano Treaty. It might have been much better. Montenegro and Bulgaria are not ill treated ; but the Herzegovina, Bosnia, Servia, Epirus, Thessaly, Albania—we would have made them all really happy if we could only have consulted the Liberals of England and the Slavs of Austria, and not the English and Austrian Cabinets. With Lord Beaconsfield and the Magyars to please, our work has been spoiled.

“ As for the Greek provinces, that is England’s fault. If poor King George had dared to disobey Lord Beaconsfield, Epirus and Thessaly would belong to him now. But Russians are anxious to give every support possible to Greece. Poor Greece, she trembles with fear because England can destroy her at a moment’s notice ! But still we hope she may receive her provinces.”

Ten years after the signing of the Treaty of San Stefano, General Ignatieff spoke to me freely as to what he regarded as the mistakes of Prince Gortschakoff’s policy in concluding peace. This is the story which I wrote out just after I had heard it from General Ignatieff’s lips :—

“ When the war was drawing to a close, General Ignatieff was sent for by the Emperor. ‘ What do you

propose now ?' said His Majesty. 'I propose,' said General Ignatieff, 'as soon as the Russian armies are within sight of Constantinople, to summon the Conference which dispersed in January, and take up the work exactly where it was left off. To the Powers I would say, "You failed at the beginning of the year, because there was no force with which to beat down the Turkish resistance. Now Russia has done your work. The Turkish resistance is crushed, and 100,000 Russian soldiers are within call to execute your will." What a splendid position we should have had ! Europe would have undertaken the responsibility, but Russia would visibly and manifestly have been her *mandataire*, and Russia would have enforced whatever the Conference decided. With 100,000 Russian soldiers south of the Balkans, there would be no unnecessary delays, and a European sanction would be at once given to the work achieved by the sacrifices of Russia.' 'It is perfect,' said the Emperor ; and for a time General Ignatieff quite understood it would be adopted.

"Unfortunately, however, for Europe, for Russia, and for the East, the senile jealousies of Prince Gortschakoff once more intervened to baulk the execution of this excellent scheme. Prince Gortschakoff wished to sign the Treaty which concluded the war. If the original Conference met, he would not be Russia's plenipotentiary, and the signature would not be his but Ignatieff's. 'Some men,' said Ignatieff once, in describing his own method, 'have only one object, and one road thither. I have one object, but to it I have many roads. If one is blocked, I take another. To me object is everything, means are nothing.' He therefore promptly devised a plan for enabling his original proposal to be carried out, with

the addition of Prince Gortschakoff's signature. 'Let the Conference be summoned at Constantinople, just as if nothing had happened since last it assembled, and then let it at once adjourn to Odessa on the ground that in Constantinople, situated between the opposing armies, it could not deliberate in security. Then when the adjourned meeting was held in Odessa, Prince Gortschakoff could take the position of Russian plenipotentiary.'

"It was of no avail. The hot-heads who were against consulting Europe insisted upon the conclusion of a treaty of peace between Russia and Turkey. General Ignatieff was ordered to draw up a draft of the proposed instrument. He sat down, and in twenty-four hours in his study in St. Petersburg he had written out the Treaty of San Stefano from first clause to last clause. He took it down to the Foreign Office, and read it over to the ministers. They marvelled at his dispatch, but unanimously approved of his proposal. 'Hélas, le pauvre Turque!' said M. Onou; but his sympathies were Platonic, nor were they shared by the heads of the Foreign Office. As General Ignatieff had drawn up the Treaty so, it was agreed, the Treaty should be.

"General Ignatieff went to San Stefano with the Treaty in his pocket, and in due time the signatures of the Turkish Commissioners were appended to the document. Russia stumbled blindly onwards to the humiliations of the Berlin Congress—humiliations which might have been softened, if not altogether avoided, had his advice been taken in time."

Such, at least, was General Ignatieff's opinion in 1888.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM SAN STEFANO TO BERLIN.

THE history of the three months following the signature of the Treaty of San Stefano is somewhat bewildering. What must perplex every one who looks over the record of that distracted time is the contrast between what the British Government threatened to do and the preparations they made to achieve their end. They kept Europe on the verge of war from January to June, and all the while kept the army and navy on a peace footing. They took a Vote of Credit for six millions, and only proposed to spend five. They talked about sending 300,000 men to Turkey, and they had neither the men, the transport, nor the material of war for an expedition of one-third that strength. They paraded their ironclads in the face of the world, while the Admiral in command of those ironclads was imploring them in vain to supply him with the cruisers and smaller craft without which his ironclads could not properly be regarded as a fleet. It was an appallingly reckless game of bluff; but at any moment it might have led to a war. However unreal was the brag and bluster of Lord Beaconsfield, he had to be taken *au sérieux* by his opponents. Most of his military and naval measures were about as practical as the Chinese method of confronting an invader by brandishing painted pictures of dragons. That the British

tolerated such tomfoolery, and allowed Lord Beaconsfield to threaten war with a first-class military Power without taking any steps to put their forces in readiness for war, justifies the gravest misgivings as to the liability of John Bull to attacks of temporary insanity. For "sheer unadulterated Bedlamism," to quote Mr. Carlyle's phrase, it would be difficult to match the antics of the Beaconsfield Government in the first half of 1878.

The ostensible reason for all the bluster and bluff of the month of March was the alleged belief that the Russians would refuse to submit the Treaty of San Stefano to the consideration of a European Congress. The only justification for such a suspicion was a somewhat obscure phrase used by Prince Gortschakoff in his dispatch as to the scope of the Congress. He wrote: "Russia leaves to the other Powers the raising of such questions at the Congress as they may think fit to discuss, and reserves to itself the liberty of accepting or not accepting the discussion of these questions." The diplomacy of Prince Gortschakoff in this crisis found no more unsparing critic than General Ignatieff.

The net result of the policy of bluff on the part of Lord Beaconsfield, and of the policy of reticence and reserve on the part of Prince Gortschakoff, was to keep the two nations most concerned in a fever of excitement, of resentment, and of alarm. Madame Novikoff was of all Russians the most unhappy. She was disappointed with the Treaty of San Stefano, and furious at the thought that it was to be still further watered down to please Lord Beaconsfield. She thus summed up her verdict upon the Peace:—

"The exact terms of Peace are published. Everybody is delighted with the fate of Montenegro. Bul-

garia is not badly off, but would be infinitely better if no European interference were allowed next year. Bosnia and Herzegovina have been sacrificed to please Austria. Our troops are deeply humiliated for not having been allowed to cross Constantinople—to please Mr. Lie-hard.

“Bulgarian fortresses—abolished in order to please Europe. Adrianople—remains Turkish, to please England and the Sultan.”

Her disappointment was shared by many of her English friends. Mr. Freeman, for instance, was hardly less indignant than were the Slavophiles of Moscow. Writing to her from Palermo on March 7, he says :—

“You ask me what I think of ‘the results of your war.’ Why, to speak the truth, it seems to me that your diplomatists have gone and spoiled what your Emperor, your people, and your army had so nobly done. I dare say they have had a hard game to play with the Jew and the Gipsy, but I believe that all diplomatists are a bad lot ; they cannot or will not understand national feelings or national rights. I have no reason to think that Russia’s diplomatists are worse than others, but I have no reason to think that they are better.

“It seems to me that by the Treaty Russia proposes to take what it should have left alone, and to leave alone what it should have taken.

“Russia should have taken any amount of territory in Armenia—the more the better ; it should not take anything in Bessarabia. From my point of view the Armenian gains by becoming a Russian subject. The Rouman, I, as belonging to a constitutional state, must say, loses by the same change.

“Again, Russia should have taken (or, better still,

sunk) the Turkish fleet. It should not ask for money. For the Turk has no money of his own; he can get it only by robbing or cheating. Sell up the Sultan and his Pashas, but don't take a penny that comes out of the pockets of their subjects, Christian or Mussulman. But then comes in all that humbug about Sultans and Pashas being Majesties, Excellencies, Highnesses, instead of simple scoundrels, thieves, liars, murderers, to be hanged for their crimes. It was loathsome when your Grand Duke shook hands with Osman, who had murdered no end of Russian prisoners, and when your Emperor exchanged friendly telegrams with the impudent liar Abdul Hamid (for whom his fellow-liars Dizzy and Layard have such 'sympathy' !).

"Again, why should Bulgaria not be as independent as Servia? Why should it be made to pay to the wretches who have hitherto robbed it? Why should Bosnia and the Herzegovina be left to 'reforms' which will never be made? It is specially hard on Herzegovina, which began the work.

"And above all comes the question of Greece. I fully understand the feeling between Russia and Greece, and the causes which led to the ill-will on both sides. But it would have been noble and generous of Russia to have done as much for the Greek as for the Slav. It would also have been wise. It is now open to any Power or any party to play Greece against Russia. And if they do, what must I and other *Quid nuncs* do? I must rejoice if the Greek lands are set free, I must raise my voice for setting them free, even if it is the Jew or the Magyar who sets them free.

"Lastly, the work is imperfect while the barbarian is left in New Rome, the misbeliever in St. Sophia.

How your men could turn round in sight of the dome I do not understand.

"In all this I see something very different from the noble spirit which stirred your people. I see in it diplomacy, the work of men whose own notions are somewhat crooked, and who have, as far as possible, to avoid offending other crooked people. They are a short-sighted lot, and their work never lasts, because they look only at the outside of things. I can fancy that they think that they have gained a point by keeping the Turk and making him subservient to Russia. Russia could have won a far higher place, and, I conceive, have better carried out the wishes of her own people by doing the work thoroughly and not by halves—that is, by rooting out the Turk utterly from all European and all Christian grounds. We can endure him at Iconium, no nearer.

"This is how things seem to me. Of course nothing can excuse the false Jew, who knew the terms all along, and lied.

"I have just been looking at volume iii. of Albert the Great and Good. What a revelation it is. How so many successive ministries put up with the bothering fellow's insolence passes my understanding. And now his book is put out by a courtier that we may go on being governed by his ghost. We used to lay ghosts in the Red Sea, but if the Great and Good were laid there, he would get up and advise everybody who went through the Suez Canal.

"I have read *Honour and Shame*, as also Grant Duff, which is, being Grant Duff, priggish. But make all your people weigh what Gladstone says about Bessarabia. Surely your Emperor is above such a very petty feeling. Let him take Erzeroum and all Armenia, and he will be doing a good work.

The Crimean War and all that came of it is wiped out well enough without that little scrap of territory. Rather let Moldavia reach to Dniester as of old. It would be a grand thing to give that bit back as the reward of Rouman services.—Yours very truly,

“EDWARD A. FREEMAN.”

Sir George W. Cox was of the same way of thinking, and many others bitterly regretted that the Russians had not made a clean sweep and rid Europe once for all of the presence of the Ottoman horde. What with Mr. Gladstone fuming over the retrocession of Bessarabia, Mr. Freeman growling because the Treaty stopped half-way, and the British Government threatening war because it went too far, the lot of Madame Novikoff was not a happy one.

I had complained of the fewness of her letters, and said I feared she was forgetting her English friends. She replied :—

“*March 25/13, 1878.*

“How little you know me, if you see no difference between my silence and forgetfulness! I am simply overworked. I have to write articles, letters, petitions, all sorts of things, and I only have two hands and just a little particle of brain for the whole of my work. Never think me angry with anything said by you. . . .

“Whatever happens in the political world, nothing may ever change my deep sympathy for my beloved England and my English friends. Poor England is governed by a terrible set of people.”

Her patience sometimes gave way altogether. Take, for instance, this letter :—

“*March 21, 1878.*

“Declare war, be manly and straightforward, but cease provoking insults, and give up evident fib-telling.

You'll never succeed in restoring faith in the word of an Englishman after these shameful two years when an English Government used every possible effort to annihilate its noble character."

It must be admitted that she had cause to be angry. Again she writes, liberating her soul to a sympathetic friend :—

"How long is the English fleet to keep all our army in check? Every day costs about two millions of roubles! I know that they calculate upon our irritation. But are we kittens to be played with for their amusement? Russia is now playing the part of a toy. We have been calm and self-possessed. Had we entered Constantinople the moment English vessels came into the Marmora Sea everything might have been saved. We are not afraid of sacrifices and self-sacrifice, but if we are misunderstood and sacrifice *our cause*, then we are criminals.

"Believe me, I would do anything in the world to avoid war. But what is to be done if England is governed despotically by a villain, and English people are trodden upon like slaves, though they insist upon the appearance of being free? Oh, I'm sick of hypocrisy and humbug!

"Forster thinks the time for an 'energetic resistance not come yet'! Dear me! What does he want more?

". . . Do write whenever you can. We are both fighting hard. We are united by the conviction of a humanitarian, generous duty. It's a noble task, worthy of a Christian. God bless you!!"

In reply to an appeal for a refutation of accusations brought against Russians by their enemies in the Press, Madame Novikoff wrote :—

“ *March 16/28, 1878.*

“ I'll give you all the information I can. I admit the difficulties of your position. But if you knew the contempt here of accusations of the kind made against us by Forbes ! ‘ Ah, you want to humiliate Russia in discussing with liars like Elliott and Beaconsfield. You care for their approval ? ’ And that is what I get in return for my inquiries. ‘ Well, let them invent still more ; your religious friends are famous for their Christian sympathy, ’ etc. etc. I cannot *tell you* how painful it is to me to hear all that is said now against England. ”

When Lord Derby resigned (March 28) she wrote almost in despair :—

“ You tell me, Do your best in order not to wound our feelings. Alas, the time is approaching soon when physical, not only moral wounds will be made by English and Russian soldiers on each other, but you and I have honestly done another work, a truly religious, humanitarian work. I am disheartened ! I believed Gladstone, Froude, and you, and hoped against hope that the two nations would remain friends since Russia kept her word and observed ‘ English interests ’ even in sacrificing some higher ones. Derby's resignation shows how mad the English Government is becoming now, and how weak and powerless are the Liberals ! ”

The situation in England was indeed disheartening. The Liberal party was rent in twain. Lord Hartington had been brought into line with the utmost reluctance, and Mr. Gladstone, idolised by the Radicals, was exceedingly unpopular in certain quarters. Here, for instance, is a letter from a Liberal in London written in March 1878 :—

"All the world here is against you. I was at the Central Liberal Committee in Parliament Street to-day, and I have never seen any set of people so completely unmanned. There are no candidates for half the boroughs and scarcely any at all for the counties. Our policy only exists by the accident that Lord Derby is for us, and Lord Beaconsfield will not turn him out, which he would certainly do for any other person who thwarted his policy to the extent Lord Derby does. Notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Gladstone has directed the course of the ship, he is so loathed and hated by almost every person who has had to do with him that I believe the crew would rather sink without him than float with him. His *modus operandi* of neither being in command or not being in command is one which renders all action hopeless."

On the other hand, the bye-elections went Gladstonian with remarkable uniformity. Just when the Treaty of San Stefano was being signed Tamworth bye-election gave a majority of two to one against the Government. "The Government have never had a more decisive defeat." In the north of England the stalwart Liberals "said things" unutterable concerning "the miasma of Cockneydom." The thought that the England of history, of heroes, statesmen, and poets, had drivelled into a mere conglomeration of Cockneys was enough to drive any man mad. Those who believed that the voice of England spoke through the Hyde Park rowdies who howled at the "bloody woodchopper" were invited to note that, with the exception of the pocket borough of Wilton, the Liberals had never lost a seat since the rising began in the Herzegovina, and that the

moment Mr. Gladstone decided to leave Greenwich he was implored to stand for Leeds, Manchester, and Newcastle. Nevertheless, the half-heartedness of London and the collapse of the Liberal opposition in Parliament caused many earnest Gladstonians sore sinkings of heart.

The following is a sample of many doleful communications received by Madame Novikoff in those dark days :—

“ If you want to force on a war, you must take into account the altered situation. Lord Beaconsfield is at last, what he has never been before, absolute disposer of England’s strength.

“ I speak frankly to you. You know how sanguine I have been from the first to the last, and you will understand how dark must be the outlook when even I lose faith in the restraining power of the English people. I actually had a letter from Mr. Froude encouraging me not to despair as things will come right yet, and soon ; so you can imagine how depressed I have been when even Mr. Froude takes to acting as a comforter. I do not suppose you can do much, perhaps you can do nothing ; but I implore you spare no trouble in order to persuade your people not to force things on, so as to leave England no choice but suicide—for suicide it will be. Poor England! in a few hours she may take the final plunge, and then—— !

“ The contemplation of the possibilities makes one’s head reel and one’s heart sink. The horrible haunting fear oppresses me that perhaps the English nation for its manifold sins has been appointed to die, and in this man Lord B. there may be its executioner, as Napoleon was the executioner of

France. Nations sometimes, devil-possessed, rush down steep places like Gadarene swine into destruction, and I fear England has been given over to the devil.

“It is not the thought of the Carnival of Death which awaits us in the battlefield, it is the doom that waits upon us for entering upon an unjust war in a wrong cause. And yet why should I fill your ear with these dismal lamentations? I would go mad if it were not for the confidence which I still possess in the Wisdom and Goodness of the Almighty.”

The worst moment was when Lord Derby resigned at the end of March, Lord Beaconsfield having determined to call on the reserves and to bring a handful of Sepoys to Malta as a demonstration of England's might and of England's strength. The pretext was that Russia would not submit the Treaty of Peace to a European Congress. The fact was that from a party point of view it was absolutely necessary for Lord Beaconsfield to do something, or appear to do something, to satisfy his Turkophile supporters. Mr. Gladstone's policy had triumphed all along the line. The Turk was done for. The Bulgarians were free. The Russians were within sight of Constantinople. Something must be done—something showy, something cheap. So the Sepoys were brought to Malta, and that got rid of Lord Derby.

Kinglake remarked lately, “Beaconsfield is imitating Canning. Canning said, I call the new world into existence to redress the balance of the old. Beaconsfield, by bringing the Sepoys, says, ‘I bring the brown world into existence to redress the balance of the white.’”

But the calling out of the reserves was not popular.

When a Hartlepool reservist, a great Jingo and hater of Russia, was ordered to join headquarters, his Jingo zeal disappeared! He said "he wished Lord Beaconsfield would go to hell"!

Among the Crusaders of 1876 the feeling prevailed that it was not Lord Beaconsfield so much as the British nation which was in danger of perdition. The writings of the Old Testament prophets were much brooded over in those days by those pious souls who feared the judgment of an Avenging Providence. Here was one of the meditations by which they sought to console themselves in their sore tribulation :—

"It is always an unfathomable mystery why the devil and all his later incarnations in the shape of the Turk, Lord B., etc. etc., should be permitted to trouble the world, but God knows best. Perhaps it may be His will that England should learn, by the terrible penalties of a disastrous war, her duties to the subject races, and the dangers of a reckless policy of irritation. Perhaps we have become so cankered by luxury, so eaten up by vice, so weakened by scepticism, that nothing but the wholesome chastisement of suffering can save us from ruin. We know not. He does. War, which scorches, purifies. And God can sometimes help us best by treating us harshly. Of course this is no argument in favour of war. It is only the outline of considerations which may enable us to reconcile the unspeakable horrors of the threatened war with the beneficent providence of an Almighty God."

When Lord Derby resigned and Lord Salisbury launched his famous Circular on April Fools' Day, subjecting the Peace Treaty to criticism so unsparing that the *Pall Mall Gazette* printed the circular as an

editorial, it seemed as if the thundercloud were about to break and all was lost. It was, however, but the darkest hour before the dawn. Lord Derby's speech explaining why he left a Cabinet which was not "drifting, but rushing into war," was as the blast of a trumpet summoning the sane and sober portion of the nation to veto a war so causeless and so unjust.

Of Lord Derby's speech, reprinted by the *Northern Echo*, nearly 500,000 copies were distributed throughout the kingdom. A Memorial to the Queen was influentially signed. Public meetings were held once more denouncing war. Great Conferences were held in Manchester and Birmingham. Lord Rosebery wrote me that opinion was so unanimous in Scotland, it was unnecessary to take the trouble of distributing Lord Derby's speech north of the Tweed.

It was extraordinary the extent to which the London mob of the West End and the unwashed rowdies who mobbed Mr. Gladstone and threw dead cats at Mr. Bradlaugh hypnotised politicians. Even Lord Derby said that "nearly everybody" was crying out for the immediate ejection of the Russians from Turkey. As a matter of fact, there was never any agitation in favour of war outside London, with the doubtful exception of Sheffield, whose zeal was believed to be heated by a hope of increased orders for armour plates. The great national outburst against the Turks in 1876 was to the anti-Russian agitation of 1878 as the Falls of Niagara are to the fetid stream which trickles from the mouth of a London sewer.

But Lord Beaconsfield was in office. Lord Hartington, the titular leader of the Opposition, was out of sympathy with the popular sentiment of nine-tenths of the country. The London clubs and the London

papers demoralised the House of Commons. Even Mr. Forster did not vote with Mr. Gladstone when Sir Wilfrid Lawson divided the House against calling out the reserves. It is not surprising that in Russia even Madame Novikoff despaired of a peaceful issue.

Mr. Gladstone, who had made a mountain out of a molehill in magnifying the importance of the retrocession of Bessarabia, saw with some dismay the handle which he had given to the enemy. On the same day that Lord Salisbury was writing his Circular Mr. Gladstone was writing to Madame Novikoff as follows :—

“ *April 1, 1878.*

“ MY DEAR MME NOVIKOFF, — The state of affairs is most painful. What I had to say upon the Peace and the European settlement was published to the world in the *Nineteenth Century* for January and for March. It is a bitter disappointment to find the conclusion of the war, for which there was a weighty cause, followed by the threat of another, for which there is no adequate cause at all, and which will be an act of utter wickedness if it come to pass — which God forbid on one side or both.

“ That unhappy subject of the bit of Bessarabia on which I have given you my mind with great freedom (for otherwise what is the use of my writing at all ?) threatens to be in part the pretext and in part the cause of enormous mischief, and, in my opinion, to mar and twist at a particular point the immense glory which Russia had acquired, already complete in a military sense, and waiting to be consummated in a moral sense too.

“ In my opinion the British Government will use the unfortunate intervention of Russia about the bit of Bessarabia to darken and confuse the immediate

question on which they have broken with her about the Congress. This is clear to me because they have learned and have printed the statement that Prince Gortschakoff has told Roumania he means to adhere to his demand. If this is not true, it should be contradicted. If it is true, then, however untenable the demand of Lord Derby about the rule of procedure, there will be a practical shifting of issues to another ground, on which every liberal Englishman will be against Russia so far as the merits are concerned, although some may say (I am not one of these) it is no affair of ours.—Believe me, in much concern, very faithfully yours,
W. E. GLADSTONE."

The following extracts from Madame Novikoff's letters afford us glimpses of the state of feeling in Moscow:—

"April 4, 1878.

"Lord Salisbury's declaration is appalling by its cynicism. What is Russia to do to answer such demands? If Turkish jurisdiction is one of English interests, there is no possibility of settling matters smoothly. It'll naturally come to war, and what a terrible one!

"The Emperor said the other day: 'If there be war with England, I'll sacrifice all the private fortune of my family.' I am greatly distressed by the political horizon. Everybody here walks like a mute."

"April 6, 1878.

"We are in a state of perfect agony. Russia is forbearing to the last degree. We stand with folded arms and do nothing, nothing whatever. I lament the Bessarabian question, as I lament the fate of the Bosnians and the Herzegovinians—who get only

what was promised by Europe. Who can seriously expect gratitude in politics? Roumania shows how quickly services are forgotten. Bulgaria will be thankful as long as she is defended by Russia, but in a few years I do not think she'll be more affectionate to us than the rest of the protected countries. It is a point to be insisted upon. We Russians have very clear views upon this point and no illusions.

“ ‘Madame Novikoff looks quite gloomy,’ said somebody. ‘Let us not wound her feelings too much.’ Yes, poor O. K. is often reproached with her Anglo-mania, but she cannot help it, and she still hopes against hope. She believes in God and the English people.”

“ April 9, 1878.

“ For God’s sake tell me why do you think I want war with England? I would give *my life* for preventing it. But what on earth can Russia do? without losing *her honour*, forgetting her sacred pledges, if Salisbury wants to annihilate all the Treaty? *I implore* you to tell me what I should say—without forgetting what is more precious than life, viz. duty towards those who depend now entirely upon our support?

“ Tell me what I can do to help the noble, the good cause which unites the English Opposition heartily with true, unselfish Slavophiles. . . . Give me some hopes that all the Liberal party have not deserted God’s justice.

O. K.”

“ April 11, 1878.

“ Lord Granville’s declaration that ‘the Opposition had only once prevented the Government from dragging the country into war,’ has produced a very discouraging impression here amongst us, the devoted supporters

of the English alliance with Russia. Lord Salisbury's speech was read by everybody with perfect indignation. The idea that war is imminent, that we are losing our time in order to strengthen our enemy's hands, is gaining ground. I am treated as a maniac blinded by my love for England. Still, Katkoff accepts whatever I write. I used all your facts and arguments in a long article which appeared this morning. So, you see, I am your tool for the good cause."

"April 12, 1878.

"I think Gortschakoff's answer is the last concession which will be made by Russia. New concessions only give rise to new demands. Every one of them is turned against us. England objected to our having anything to do with Egypt. Egyptian troops fought against us. England forbid our approach to the Dardanelles. The presence of your fleet was the consequence of our yielding to your demand. We had to avoid Constantinople—you are close to it. We respected all your interests—you despised all ours, and we are treated by your official Press with utmost contempt. What have we gained by our sacrifices? Tell me frankly what would *you* do were you in my place? The truth is the honest English voices are powerless. Mr. Forster, Lord Hartington, abstained from supporting Mr. Gladstone. What that means *nobody* here can understand."

"April 17, 1878.

"Can you imagine that the telegraph, while bringing us every word pronounced by Lord Beaconsfield and Hardy, simply mentioned a reply made by Lord Derby? Is it not striking? The fact is there: we only learned through the English papers, arriving

six days later, of the admirable, noble speech of Lord Derby, which might be pronounced by Gladstone or Carnarvon. I am very, very happy to read it, however late. Your most welcome telegram about the voices in favour of peace was a real godsend. Politics make me almost ill. Everything is so full of danger! I wish heartily that wretched Bessarabian question had never been mentioned."

"April 18, 1878.

"I wrote a longish article urging Russia to make a last sacrifice to the Slavonic cause in resisting Beaconsfield's threats with calm and self-control. 'The courage and gallantry of our troops have been sufficiently proved. Can we not remember that in declaring war against England the first result of it would be to embarrass the newly freed Slavs in their progress, and stop all the reforms they are most in need of?' etc. etc. In fact, I wrote entirely from your point of view, and displeased many. People are beginning to lose their patience, and it is, alas, a bad beginning!"

"April 24, 1878.

"I think Congress will simply prolong our agony. Lord Salisbury and Beaconsfield are determined to fight for their prestige, and every day exhausts our finances and patience. We had to free the Slavs from Turkey as well as from England. We had in view only the first part of our duty. That was our terrible mistake."

"April 26, 1878.

"What a time we are living in! I envy a friend who has gained this morning a severe typhoid fever. She will either die or be ill for three or four weeks, senseless. It is terrible to realise all that is going on!"

"I am so wretched, everything is so dark, that I can only breathe in thinking of the past."

I sent extracts from some of those letters to Mr. Gladstone. He replied :—

"April 9, 1878.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I do not wonder at Madame Novikoff's depression, for whether she be or be not in any sense an agent of the Russian Government, on which I have no knowledge, I am confident that her heart is really in the matter of peace and of friendship with England.

"We have behaved extremely ill to Russia ; and the manner in which our neutrality—such neutrality !—is held up as a favour to her is impudence of the first water.

"Its proposition about Bessarabia—not the road but the abstraction—gives a pretext to the War party, and causes pain and dismay among the friends of peace and freedom. Barring this, there may be defects—as indeed there must be from its nature—in this arrangement with Turkey, but I see none which ought to draw down censure.

"I am of opinion that though the *tone* of the Liberal party as a whole has decidedly gone down within the last month or six weeks, through the alarm of some members for their seats, yet the debates in the two Houses last night have been in their effects very favourable to the cause of peace. A friend asked me, before then, what I thought of the likelihood of war. I answered that likelihood can only be expressed clearly in betting language, and that the odds were two to one for peace.

"This is now, I think, bettered. Meanwhile, we

have only to contend steadily and manfully for the right, as you do.—Yours faithfully,

“ W. E. GLADSTONE.”

Mr. Freeman wrote from time to time, sending ringing words of cheer from afar :—

“ PALERMO, *April* 9, 1878.

“ I hope what you say about being ‘ disgusted at moderation ’ represents Russia’s feelings generally. What is coming no one can guess. The Jew seems to have everything his own way.”

Mr. Bright was much depressed, despite the South Northumberland Election, in which Albert (afterwards Earl) Grey tied with Mr. Ridley for a seat previously held by the Conservatives. Mr. Ridley repudiated indignantly the accusation that he wished to re-establish Turkish power in Europe. Mr. Bright wrote :—

“ *April* 26, 1878.

“ I know not how to deal with the present crisis. The constituencies have made the minister, and they must reap as they have sown. Russia is not invading India. India is invading Russia, or preparing for it ! Still, unless Austria comes into the attempted alliance against Russia, I do not see how there can be war. The Northumberland Election is a great fact, and on our side doubtless. I cannot fight as I did twenty-four years ago. I can only protest and submit. —Yours truly,

JOHN BRIGHT.”

Mr. Henry Richard, Secretary of the Peace Society, writing to me about the proposed circulation of Lord Derby’s speech, said :—

“ I doubt whether it would produce the effect you anticipate. The people of this country are in one of their periodical fits of madness, and nothing but a great disaster will recall them to their senses. At any rate, you have done your part bravely.”

Mr. Leonard (now Lord) Courtney wrote :—

“ I confess I have very little hope, except in the prudence and persistence of one or two ministers ” [I believe Sir Stafford Northcote and Mr. Cross—but he does not say], “ and you know how little confidence is to be placed there. Is there some sign of reviving quietness among the people? I should like to believe it, but hesitate. . . .”

The period of suspense lasted during the whole of May. The bellicose vapourings of the War party, the military theatricalities of the Government had their natural result in depressed trade with its corollary in industrial disputes and dangerous riots. At Blackburn the mob was so violent that the soldiers had to be called out, and on one occasion at least the rioters were fired on.

Grave constitutional questions were raised by the bringing 7000 Sepoys from India to Malta, which on the motion of Mr. Fawcett were debated in the House of Commons. Reading over the files of the newspapers of that distracted time, in the light of subsequent wars in South Africa and in Manchuria, one is more than ever impressed with a sense of the ridiculous futility of the military preparations of the Beaconsfield Cabinet. It is almost incredible that any men outside Bedlam could have brought the British Empire to the verge of war with a military Power of the first

class without making something like adequate preparations for the conflict so recklessly challenged. But beyond calling out 40,000 reserves and bringing 7000 Sepoys from India, Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues did nothing to be in readiness for the war for which their supporters clamoured by day and by night. If war had resulted from the policy of menace and insult, no men would have so richly deserved impeachment for high treason as those Ministers who risked war with Russia with an army inadequate for war with the Transvaal.

After the Blackburn riots I wrote a somewhat alarmist article discussing the possible consequences at home of the foreign war with which Lord Beaconsfield was threatening to involve the Empire. Something in the article appears to have struck a sympathetic chord in the mind of Mr. Froude. He wrote me as follows :—

“ May 16.

“ Your picture is sad enough and I dare say faithful enough. The guilt of the Government is so patent and so gross that I have not any doubt (not the slightest) that retribution will fall on them. And as all parties (except the rump of the Radicals) participate in this crime so far as they have not protested against it, all parties will probably share in the consequent suffering.

“ I cannot foretell in what shape it may fall. The decay of trade which is the cause of these riots is due in large part to the paralysis of enterprise all over the world, arising from the alarm and uncertainty which the policy of Lord Beaconsfield has occasioned. I am not without hope that this will be recognised in the North by both the people and the employers, and that the cap may be fitted on the right head. If

so, the riots may have a real value. If not, and if a war is to be, I can contemplate with a bitter equanimity the inevitable consequences. I am sick of Parliament and its factions, its pretensions and its impotence ; at times I am sick of Parliaments altogether. But the English mind has a fierce rectitude at bottom, and if its conscience is once roused, crooked things can still be pushed straight.

" You may do good if you insist, as you truly may, on the political origin of the distress. In Wales I hear the poor coal and iron workers have eaten through their furniture and almost their clothes. Tens of thousands are on the edge of starvation. The Radicals refused to support Henry Smith at Oxford in consequence of what he said on the Eastern Question. He has been beaten ignominiously, and I am heartily glad of it."

At the beginning of the previous month Mr. Froude had excited much dissatisfaction among the Stalwarts by publicly advising the Liberals to wash their hands of all responsibility for the threatened war. He wrote :—

" The Liberal party have disapproved of the action of the Government from the beginning. At each step when a peaceful solution of the Eastern question appeared within reach, the Government has broken up the European Concert and pursued a policy of its own. That policy precipitated the war between Turkey and Russia. The authors of it will have the credit if it succeeds, they too must bear the responsibility if it fails. Whether it succeeds or fails, on them and on their children will rest the blood which is shed in a quarrel which the Liberal party have all

along declared to be unnecessary. The single duty of the leaders of the Opposition is to wash their hands of it.”¹

Mr. Froude's counsels were not listened to, however, and the opposition to the threatened war was kept up with the utmost spirit throughout the country.

The ostensible reason why the Continent was kept on the tenter-hooks of uncertainty during the spring of 1878 was the perverse misinterpretation by the British Government of the somewhat ambiguous phrase in Prince Gortschakoff's dispatch when in communicating the Treaty of San Stefano to the Powers he said that Russia reserved for herself full liberty of appreciation and action with regard to any of the clauses at the Conference. This was held to indicate an intention on Russia's part to repudiate the right of the Conference to modify or annul any stipulations upon which Russia might choose to insist. It was in vain that Russia protested that while she claimed for herself the same liberty of withdrawing from discussion which she conceded to the others she recognised the right of the Powers to discuss everything in the Treaty. Lord Beaconsfield insisted that Russia must herself submit the Treaty as a whole to the Conference, and in order to compel her to do this, he menaced her with war. It was a ridiculous punctilio, which was persisted in for months. But the sturdy and uncompromising opposition to war kept up by Mr. Gladstone and the Stalwarts—weak in Parliament but strong in the country—at last convinced Lord Beaconsfield that it would be well to retreat from his menacing position. The moment he came to this

¹ *Times*, April 6, 1878.

conclusion there was no difficulty in finding a formula to cover his retreat. Count Schouvaloff, aided, it was said, by the Crown Prince,—afterwards the Emperor Frederick of Germany,—arranged the matter at Berlin. Germany undertook to issue the invitation to the Conference, and the formula of invitation was so worded as to make it an informal guarantee of the free discussion of the whole of the Treaty. At the same time, by a private arrangement with the British Cabinet, Russia was guaranteed in advance that the Conference would ratify the whole of the treaty so far as it related to Russia's compensations, and would confine itself to modifying the other provisions relating to the liberation of the Slavs. Bulgaria was to be sawn asunder and Macedonia abandoned to the Turks; otherwise the Treaty was to stand. As I wrote at the time when the acceptance of Russian terms was unofficially announced (May 28):—

“ The fact, I take it, is simply this. Lord Beaconsfield believed two months since that the English nation was so far delirious with the war fever as to welcome a war with Russia. He has been undeceived. The Manchester Demonstration, the unanimous animosity to war shown by the May Meetings, the quarter of a million signatures to the Declaration against War, the Working Man's Conference, the elections for South Northumberland, Tamworth, and Reading, together with the total absence of any manifestations of enthusiasm for war, convinced him that the nation had determined upon the maintenance of peace. At the same time, it is in the highest degree probable that the influence of the German Court was brought to bear upon the Queen, and that her eyes were opened by her daughter to the

peril into which Lord Beaconsfield was steering the ship of state."

We all heaved a deep sigh of relief, but the period of suspense had been too long and the strain too severe for us to feel ourselves out of danger.

Lord Beaconsfield executed his strategic movement to the rear just at the moment when the official chiefs of the Opposition were making up their minds to capitulate. Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright, and the Stalwarts stood firm, but Lord Hartington and Mr. Forster had lost heart.

Towards the end of May Mr. Forster made a speech in which, to the dismay of the Stalwarts, he deprecated embarrassing the Government. I wrote to him at once protesting against this doctrine. It seemed to me that our supreme duty was to embarrass, to checkmate, the Government in its efforts to bring about war. The result was thus reported by me to Madame Novikoff on May 29 :—

"I am very sorry to have to send you some bad news. I had a letter from Mr. Forster the other day—yesterday—which disheartened me greatly. I had written to him, as I told you, telling him that I did not believe that the Government ought *not* to be embarrassed, as he said, and this is his reply.

"You can understand my dismay in perusing the following letter from a Liberal leader :—

"As a general rule, the Opposition ought not to weaken the Government before foreign countries unless at the same time it attempts to upset the Government, and not even then after the impossibility of doing so has become evident. Take even the extreme case of the Government being alto-

gether in the wrong as between itself and the foreign country, even then I can hardly imagine an instance in which the protest would not be sufficient, leaving the responsibility to the Government and to the majority of the country. The logical result of continuing the opposition would be assistance to the foreigner, which of course is out of the question. However, I suppose the real difference between us, if there be any, is this: that I put the preservation of peace more in the foreground than you do. For some time past it has been pretty clear to me that the only way for peace to be preserved was for Russia to make concessions. Be our Government right or wrong in the stand they have made, it was clear they had the support of the country in making it, and that they did not intend to give way. Any encouragement, therefore, to Russia to hold out and make war almost certain became a very serious matter.'

"I wrote to Mr. Forster in reply (1) that so far from it being clear that the Government was supported by the country, the exact reverse appeared to me to be the truth; (2) that the Government would never dare to risk a war if they had not counted upon the Liberal leaders acquiescing in the crime; and (3) that as for encouraging the foreigner, the foreigner ought to be encouraged if he is in the right. But alas! I am a poor fanatic who will get shot some day. I confess I was dismayed at Forster's confession. The Liberal leaders are evidently disheartened and all to pieces, and cannot be relied upon to resist B. I am unutterably ashamed of them, but it is well you should know the truth. Keep Forster's letter and name private, but of course if you think that it will dissipate any illusions—which

I have entertained and done my best to encourage—you can use the information therein contained in the right quarters. Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright, and about fifty or sixty Members of Parliament, backed by all that is best and noblest in the country, are dead against war.”

It was an interesting clash of opinion foreshadowing a much more violent collision twenty years later, when, Mr. Gladstone being dead, the Liberal leaders followed the Forsterian doctrine, and by so doing threw away the opportunity of averting the South African war.

The motives which animated the Stalwarts to oppose with such passionate earnestness were intensely patriotic. Their point of view was faithfully expressed in the following letter which I wrote to Madame Novikoff while we were in the thick of the combat :—

“ *March 25, 1878.*

“ Words cannot tell how rejoiced I am if anything that I can do or anything that I have written could in any way lessen the intense irritation which prevails at Moscow against my unhappy country. You know well that, with all its faults, England has many, many attractions, even for a stranger. What, then, must it have for one who was born within its boundaries and who learned to love his country as soon as he learned to read? England is very, very dear to me. I do not often parade my loyalty, and do not speak much of my patriotism, but no one among all the noisy Chauvinists seems to as much as understand the sublime enthusiasm which fills my soul when I contemplate the past and meditate upon the future of my beloved England.

“England, if but true to her God-given mission, will rule one-half the world! English will be the tongue of the world. Already your sceptre— But why rhapsodise to you about this! You know too well how splendid are my dreams of England’s destinies. But to fulfil these gorgeous visions England must be true to herself, England must be true to God. And if—oh terrible thought!—she abandons that glorious mission and turns aside to war with the only other nation with whom she has to share the future of Asia, I have a fearful foreboding that she will fall, fall, fall as Babylon in the Apocalypse. Oh, may God in His mercy avert that frightful doom! How awful to think England—that is myself—should meet with its death-blow from Russia—that is you—or *vice versâ*. And yet it seems to be contemplated with equanimity by millions—blinded, it would seem, by the Almighty in order that they may go willingly to the slaughter. It would be noble, divine, to be able to minister in any way to the cause of peace, to be able to assuage to ever so small an extent the raging of the fever which threatens such terrible ills. I am glad and most grateful that my notice of your O. K. letters has done any good, be it ever so little. If I could but be God’s agent in restoring good friendly feelings between Russia and England, how much rather would I choose that than any ‘celebrity’ of which you speak. Need I say also that it delights me much to have pleased you by the article. I thought that it would please you, and I have not been disappointed. I am always delighted when I can please you, be it ever so little; for by that means only can I acknowledge my deep, deep debt of gratitude to you. I don’t think there will be war. I cannot believe it. I dare not believe it. Our countries

have nothing to win and all to lose by war. I think it not improbable that we may force you to enter Constantinople and bring the Ottoman Empire to an end. But we have plenty to do without fighting you. We shall seize islands, etc., belonging to the Turk. See if Beaconsfield does not pull Turkey down to the ground yet. He only is the real anti-Turk. Good-bye. God bless you. I wish I could do something more for you, but I can't. W. T. S.

“P.S.—Read Gladstone’s speech to the Liberal five hundred of Greenwich herewith. In the first part of his speech he praises the Nonconformists as ‘the citadel of the representatives of justice and humanity.’ ”

Of the letters which Mr. Froude wrote to Madame Novikoff during this period, I quote two written in April and one in May which afford a vivid glimpse of the situation as it appeared to a close observer in the West End of London :—

“*April 13, 1878.*

“MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—I think matters are improving. The last debate in Parliament was very useful. Lord Derby’s speech has been felt through the country, the conscience of some of the people (still, alas! a minority) is beginning to move, and the Liberal party in the northern towns are once more active. If Lord Beaconsfield can be prevented from going to war for another month, the reaction will have gathered force, and England will by that time have discovered that it has been on the brink of an enormous crisis and an equally enormous folly. . . . The chief danger now left is at Constantinople, where Layard’s intrigues may lead the

Turks into some act of rashness. *Once let the Congress meet, and all is safe.* Peace will be secured, and the day of reckoning will come with the coterie of knaves who have brought about the mischief. I am very sorry for you. I know what you must be feeling. Your expulsion of the *Turks* from Bulgaria will be recognised hereafter as the most distinctly beneficial act which has been done in Europe for two centuries. Systematic lying has prevented the truth from being seen by us as it is. But it *will be seen*; and if no fresh convulsion takes place now, it will be seen very shortly.

"Prince Gortschakoff's Circular has been well received. I too was in despair when I wrote last, but I hope once more.—Yours ever warmly,

"J. A. FROUDE.

"I wrote a short letter in the *Times* a few days ago. If I may judge by the violence of the letters which I receive from the Premier's admirers, it has not been without effect. Press on the Congress. The hope of the enemy is to exhaust you by the expense of a prolonged crisis."

"April 28, 1878.

"Your letters of the 21st and 22nd reached me last night. You are unhappy, of course; so we all must be who hate lying and treachery and injustice. And my country, I know too well, has behaved as ill as possible. But the question is, what is to be done to prevent those who mean ill to Russia from having their way? The situation is this: the greater part of the English people in their hearts are ashamed of the *Turks*, and would not, if they could help it, lift a finger to restore them. But Lord Beaconsfield has taken advantage of the Roumanian business

and Prince Gortschakoff's hesitation about submitting the Treaty to a Congress, to persuade the country that Russia has ambitious objects of her own, for which the protection of the Slavs has been used as a screen, and so has prevented the Opposition from being able to interfere with him. Now let Russia frankly submit the Treaty, and public feeling will go round. You are afraid that the Cabinet here is only trying to gain time. But time works both ways. Every serious person in England is against war. Already, even as things are now, an increasing party is opposed to the policy of the Ministers. *The elections show it.* Once let the Congress meet with your free consent, and I am sure that the Liberal party will insist on your having fair play.

"Make your first condition, if you please, when the proceedings open that no part of Europe emancipated from the Turks shall be restored to him. Lord Beaconsfield must consent or refuse. If he consents, he will lose the Turks for ever. If he refuses, he will lose his support *here*, and all the other European Powers will be against him also. Here am I advising as if I were an accredited diplomatist. You will think me really absurd and presumptuous, but you know I have been pretty well acquainted with the history of the whole subject as it has been handled *inside* the English Cabinet, and thus I think I see how Lord B.'s treachery and knavery can best be baffled."

"May 20, 1878.

"MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—I wrote you a long letter last week, but I burnt it, as likely to mislead. Generally the situation is this: I insist upon it the more from the hopeful tone of your letter of the 11th, which only reached me this morning. Do

not trust to the revival of the Liberal party. They will be strong enough by and by to *revenge* you. They cannot and will not prevent the Government from going to war unless Russia consents to go into Congress. Go into Congress, and the fair and honourable sentiment of England will prevent Lord Beaconsfield and the Queen from playing false any further. Insist, if you will, that none of the freed nationalities shall be replaced under Turkey. Resume the great moral position which you would have occupied if you had called Europe into your counsels immediately after the Armistice. All will then be well. All England, except a small minority (and except the Porte) will be with you, *but the Liberal party*—in Parliament—is made of water. About a hundred are staunch, the rest are cowards or traitors. There will be a fight to-night on the Constitutional Question, about the Indian troops. About this the whole Opposition will be united. We are growing suspicious about ——'s vagaries. And the great Whig families regard themselves as guardians of the popular liberties. But do not let the numbers on the Division (however large they may be) mislead you. Again I say, we shall revenge the war in a few years, if war there is to be. But we cannot prevent it. Yield graciously *now*. Lord B. and his friends will have a bad triumph. They will mount their dunghill and crow. But in two years there will be a change of Government. The history of this false, feeble, and treacherous policy will then be fairly reviewed, and justice dealt out to them and to you. You will be sorry for what I tell you, but I don't believe Russia has a warmer friend in England than I am, so you may believe what I say.

“It will be a poor consolation to you if a fresh

struggle is thrust upon you, and a war is lighted up all over the world (as it will be), to learn ten years hence that the English Constitution has been upset, that the Conservative party is destroyed, and perhaps the Monarchy along with it.

“After all, things are better than they were twenty-four years ago. *Then* the country were unanimous against you, with the exception of a mere handful of us. Now we can at any rate secure fair play as soon as the question is taken out of the hands of diplomatists and is thrown in a Congress before the world.—Yours sadly but faithfully,

“J. A. FROUDE.”

I close this chapter by quoting a characteristic letter from Mr. Freeman to Madame Novikoff, which reads somewhat strangely now, but which, in that month of disgust and of indignation, was as balm to the wounded hearts of those who had fought so stoutly and failed so lamentably to save the honour of liberty-loving England:—

“What will the Hebrew Vizier of the Empress of India do, backed by the barbarians from that Empire by whom he is seeking to tread down England and Europe, and turn the world into one great Asian mystery? (Is not his spite against Servia partly owing to the abundance of pigs in that land?) You see that Lord Derby has got so much better that he could no longer act with the Jew; while Lord Salisbury—having been educated—has got so much worse than he even. See the ‘infamous Circular.’ Well, if they can cut short your Bulgaria for the benefit of the Greeks, well and good; but they will want to cut it short for the benefit of the *Turks*. Dizzy, of course, grudges the enlargement of the space within which

men cannot be impaled. He has utterly cheated and disappointed the Greeks, promising help to the kingdom, persuading them to call back their troops, and then all that comes is the thousand and first lying promise of reform in Thessaly and Epirus, by the Turk. 'All Ottomans to be equal'—men of Macedonia and Thessaly to sink into Ottomans! Now I speak plainly. Your Emperor, whom we used to call Alexander the Liberator, has lost his position with *us* by the Bessarabian demand and by leaving all the Greeks and most of the Slavs to their fate. I say to their fate, for of course 'reforms' go for nothing—the only reform is to get rid of the root of evil, the rule of the Turk. Can't you get him to do something in the Congress that will set all this right and win back his old name? Make some proposal that the Jew cannot for very shame dare to oppose, and so take the wind out of his sails? Only remember what I said a year ago: 'We can trust the Russian Emperor, we can trust the Russian people, but we have no more faith in Russian diplomatists than we have in the diplomatists of any other nation.' Has not that come true?"

CHAPTER VII.

THE BERLIN CONGRESS.

THE fight was over at the end of May. The Ministry had accepted their defeat. But it was apparently part of the bargain that they were to be allowed to make believe, through the machinery of a European Congress, that they had achieved a great victory. Russia, having secured the substance, disdainfully left the semblance to her defeated adversary. The Capitulation was signed on May 30. It was not divulged until June 14, and then by one of those accidents which are among the little ironies of history. A clerk occasionally employed at the Foreign Office was entrusted with the copying of the secret Memorandum. He claims that he carried its contents in his memory, and a fortnight later he sold his secret to the *Globe*, a Conservative organ which on that occasion bought its right to a place in history by betraying the jealously guarded secret of the Government of its own friends.

Until the *Globe* published the Memorandum on June 14, the situation was as tense as ever. Mr. Freeman was furiously angry, as usual. He wrote :—

“ I hope you observe that the renegade Hobart has been dining with the Empress of India, and also been staying at Hatfield when it became a temporary Ghetto.”

The announcement that Lord Beaconsfield was going to Berlin as first British plenipotentiary roused Mr. Freeman to still fiercer wrath. Writing to Madame Novikoff, he said :—

“ I am desperately angry with your diplomatists, more and more so the more I think of it. They have just gone and spoiled the greatest work that any nation ever undertook ; that is all. And now the Jew is going, in full cap and bells, to represent England on the Berlin stage. I wish the Turks or the Ogres or somebody would catch him and shave him and cut short his gaberdine, as happened to certain earlier Hebrew Ambassadors. I see the Turk is to be represented in the Congress : what good can come of it ? More revolts, more massacres, more lies, more wars, more Congresses ; and it might all have been done at once. What will the Jew talk among the Excellencies ? Does he know any tongue beside the dialect of his own novels ? I can't fancy his Hebrew being first-rate.”

On June 6, Madame Novikoff, replying to my letter informing her of Mr. Forster's change of front, wrote me the following letter, in which I heard for the first time of her interview with Prince Gortschakoff after the St. James's Hall Conference :—

“ I am delighted with your courage and the nobleness of views in your answer to Mr. Forster's cautious, timid, and (I think) unpatriotic yielding to Lord Beaconsfield's policy. Your endeavours as well as mine will, I am afraid, have no great result now that your Cabinet has evidently compelled the Liberals to be almost silent. But I am nevertheless proud and happy that we both have done our duty honestly,

though unsupported; and my great delight is also to think that, in spite of the friendship which unites us, you wrote just as you *do now* before you ever met me, and I have followed the good line before I ever heard of the *Northern Echo*.

"Last year, soon after the St. James's Hall Conference, on passing St. Petersburg, where I saw my brother Alexander, I made a point of seeing Prince Gortschakoff and of urging him, as well as I could, to do justice to the better part of England, etc. etc. etc. I gave him so vivid a description of the magnificent Conference, and the sympathies of the real representatives of well-thinking Englishmen, that he related every detail of our conversation to His Majesty the same evening.

"Prince Gortschakoff observed, 'Well, but all these people are powerless, and Beaconsfield will hoodwink them at a moment's notice.'

" 'I hope not,' I replied, 'but I am not going to dictate a policy. I only insist upon rendering justice to people who are as noble, as true, as generous as ourselves.'

" 'You are partial,' said he.

" 'No,' I replied, 'I am true.'

"But in all Russia I am the only journalist never tired of showing the difference between the two Englands. Many people who are in favour of a speedy rupture with England are furious with me, saying, 'You only show one part of the question. You'll see that the whole of the country will yield to Beaconsfield, and that the Opposition is divided entirely, whilst the Government becomes stronger.'

"Lord Beaconsfield's appointment to the Congress strengthens those views. Mr. Froude from the very beginning has shown a great penetration and know-

ledge of things. He put me on my guard and almost showed a second-sight; but let others describe what they like, I can only be the advocate of those who sympathise with the enslaved Christians. Gratitude is my principal feeling towards them."

I replied :—

"I don't think Gortschakoff was right about Lord Beaconsfield hoodwinking all the St. James's Hall people. They did not and have not changed their minds. Nor have they been powerless. We 'held' Beaconsfield until you smashed the Turks right up to Constantinople."

The announcement of the meeting of the Congress delighted M. de Laveleye, who wrote (June 9) to console Madame Novikoff and send her a word of caution :—

"Reasonable concessions will not prevent the end being attained. Turkey no longer exists. The future of the Southern Slavs is beginning. But bear in mind, there must be time. Roads, railways, mines, are matters of capital and foreign money.

"Economic development must precede political development. Therein lies Russia's weakness.

"Her wealth and productions are not yet on a par with the size of the edifice and her rôle in Europe and Asia."

Lord Beaconsfield left for Berlin on June 8, Lord Salisbury followed on June 10. The opening banquet of the Berlin Congress took place on June 14. It was something like a Belshazzar's feast for Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury; for on the same afternoon

the *Globe* published the full text of the secret capitulation. I wrote at once to Madame Novikoff :—

“ Rejoice ! Rejoice ! Rejoice ! The victory is won ! Mr. Gladstone has triumphed. Lord Beaconsfield is worsted, worsted, worsted ! I enclose you this French text of the Russo-Anglo Agreement—the Treaty, in fact, between Russia and England, *which holds good even if the Congress fails*, in which Lord Beaconsfield agrees to everything and carries out Mr. Gladstone’s policy. Though we are in a ‘weak minority,’ we can make our Government do what we want ! No more fighting for Turks now, praise God ! I am overjoyed. I wrote, as you know, in the leader saying Beaconsfield had backed down, but I did not think he had backed down so far. It is splendid—magnificent ! I enclose you a leader I have written to-night upon it. Perhaps you might find it worth while reproducing either in the Moscow papers or as a translation. The Tory Turk papers are gnashing their teeth and cursing Lord Beaconsfield through all the moods and tenses.

“ Few moments of more exquisite delight have ever been vouchsafed to mortal men than these in which the stalwart Gladstonians revelled while reading the furious diatribes of the Jingo Press over their betrayal by their own champions. The *Standard*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and *Financial Opinion* were in the depths of despair. One irate Tory journalist said that Lord Beaconsfield had filched and surreptitiously carried out Mr. Gladstone’s policy of parallel plunder and inflicted the deepest injury ever suffered by the Conservative party. I think your *cue*, if you will pardon the word, is to insist that the English Government, finding that the English

people would not let them fight, that the labouring classes would not enter the army,—in fact, that the distress of an unpopular war would have produced riots to which those of Blackburn were child's play,—backed down, surrendered the Salisbury Circular, threw over the Turk, and came to terms with Russia. At the bottom of all it is the English people, your friends and my countrymen, who have smashed Lord B. Praise God! We seem to be out of the wood at last. Our long struggle has been crowned by a splendid victory."

It was well that I was able to reassure her. On the first reading of the Memorandum she had noticed nothing in it but the division of the Bulgarias. She wrote me on June 18:—

"It is greatly to be pitied if they insist upon *two* Bulgarias. It'll throw them both in our arms. The best thing would be to see Bulgaria really strong and independent. Forgetting our duty towards the Balkan Christians would be too shameful. I am disgusted with my brother-in-law and Schouvaloff also, but I still believe in our Emperor. He is a *good Russian* and a man of honour. Russia eagerly hopes for peace, but they are making *very* serious preparations for war. The Grand Duke Alexander—our Heir Apparent—will command the south army, and General Obroutcheff—a very able soldier—will be the chief of his staff. The agony of ignorance and uncertainty we are living in is very painful! Freeman is right—'our wretched diplomatists are trying to undo what the Russian people have done'; but these cowardly egotists are not at the head of our country yet, and there is some hope that we may *peacefully and honestly* keep our words."

Therein spoke the Slavophile enthusiast who felt disgust and horror at the betrayal of the Southern Bulgarians far more keenly than the sense of relief from the dread of war with England. We were not pleased at the sawing asunder of Bulgaria; but to us it was only a detail compared with the enormous advantages of a pacific settlement.

The following characteristic letter from Mr. Froude was written on June 22 :—

“ Here we know nothing, and wait like the rest of the world on the pleasure of the Congress. People assume that the Eastern Question will now be settled, and in this present mood still glorify Lord Beaconsfield. But as he has been a Mountebank from the beginning, so when the air quiets down the real character of his conduct will be seen, and properly appreciated. He and his party are responsible for all the trouble in Europe during the past three years, and they have not even the merit of having been guided by any real policy, however wrong-headed and mistaken. They have simply wished to make themselves of consequence, like a mischievous boy who lays a stone on a line of rail to throw off the engine and upset the train. These things always adjust themselves in the end, and the fool and the devil receive each their due at no distant date. They do mischief in the meantime, sometimes immense mischief, but then we fall back on the question why fools and devils are permitted in the constitution of this world. ‘ Why God no kill Devil ? ’ as Man Friday said to Robinson Crusoe. ‘ Why was a Beaconsfield allowed to be,’ we cannot tell. I never knew my countrymen in so absurd a state of mind. But I think that this is the last time that England will interfere on the Continent. Trade is in a frightful

state and is growing worse. There will be a heavy Bill to pay, and ill-temper will soon grow.

“For myself I care less and less for politics. I shall see no good happen to my country in what remains to me of life. And I shall keep within my own lines of literature. Why do not you write a novel? in English? You could do it admirably well. Women always write the best novels, and what woman has had so wide experience of modern men and things?”

“Carlyle is well, to appearances, but he is growing very weak. His interest in this life is fast waning, and his eyes are straining into the ‘beyond.’ And what is that? Are we to begin again the round of passion and struggle and hope and glimpses of happiness and in the end weariness and disappointment? And is this to be called eternal peace? Give us sleep rather, never more to wake, and above all never to *dream*.—Yours ever,
J. A. FROUDE.”

I wrote on July 1 :—

“The Jingoës are very mad, but it does not matter about the Jingoës now the Government is committed to peace. The Turkophiles, I have always told you, are numerically and intellectually very insignificant. They derived all their importance from Lord Beaconsfield’s sympathies, and now that he has deserted them there is not a man among them that dare speak in favour of war. It is contemptible but true that all the wretched cowards who were two months ago clamouring for war are now swearing that they never wanted anything but peace, and that Lord Beaconsfield’s policy was the only policy that could secure peace.”

Mr. Gladstone wrote on the following day :—

“ LONDON, *July 2, 1878.*

“ MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—I do not think the time has come when either you or I or any one can form an impartial estimate of the entire results of the great Eastern crisis. But particular things are sufficiently clear, seen through the curtain which shrouds the proceedings of the Congress. A great work of liberation has undoubtedly been effected. To whom the glory of it belongs is a question which the minds of my countrymen are too sore to discuss. But there is no doubt at all as to the supreme award of history. I may repeat here what I lately said to the wife of the American Minister at St. Petersburg: the reign of your Emperor will be great as long as the sun shall rise and set.

“ But my principal office has been to say disagreeable things to those with whom I am supposed greatly to sympathise. I made a sharp reply to the Greeks on receiving from them a copy of a memorial they prepared for the Congress or some one at it, because of its tone towards the Slavs. About Bessarabia I retain all my old objections. A Congress of this kind may be compared to a race in which every horse carries so much weight. Russia having weighted herself with Bessarabia, was obliged to rid herself of weight in some other direction. So she could not do as much as she would otherwise have done, for example, on behalf of Montenegro. And Austria making an unjust concession to Russia on the Danube was thereby enabled to extort another unjust concession from her in the case of Montenegro. I hope, however, that though the Greeks have no claim on Russia in particular, she will act handsomely by them, and strive for benefits on their behalf. It will be for her fame and for her benefit. As to this

absurd idea of an English protectorate in Asia, it is as yet too little developed for comment; and those who think as I do deem it their duty to be very silent for the present.

“I am only able to read the newspapers very partially, and I have by no means seen all you may have written in the *Northern Echo*. As to what I have read, my opinion is worth little; but justice compels me to say that I have thought it excellent in temper, feeling, and ability. God in His mercy grant that, as I hope, we may be near a sortie from this great controversy. As to your Russian regrets, if what you want is facility for intrigue hereafter, undoubtedly a small Bulgaria will favour such views much more than a large one.—Believe me yours very faithfully,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

“By the 20th I hope to go to Hawarden.”

But like Rachel mourning for her children, who refused to be comforted because they were not, Madame Novikoff refused to see in the Berlin Treaty anything but the betrayal of the Southern Slavs. The Berlin Treaty was signed July 13.

Here is a cry from the heart, dated Moscow, July 23, 1878:—

“MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,—What England has done towards Greece, Russia has done towards all the Slavs. We have abandoned, betrayed their hopes, their confidence. I am so distressed, so ashamed, so wretched that I could not at once thank you for your few lines of July 2, though it really was the only pleasant moment that I had during all this terrible month. The perusal of your manly, generous, noble thoughts was a godsend. I have lately translated

Aksakoff's last speech. Mr. Stead will, I hope, insert and send it to you. Please read it if you care to know why the whole of Moscow feels as wretched as I do! God bless you for all you are doing still, in spite of all our wretched policy.—Yours ever heartily,
“O. K.”

While the Berlin Congress was still in session, I wrote to Mr. Gladstone, asking him some questions on points on which I wished to have the benefit of his judgment before I began to write the story of the anti-Turkish agitation. He had already promised to place his papers at my disposal for the purpose of facilitating my task. I did not keep a copy of my letter, but Mr. Gladstone's reply sufficiently indicates its scope and tenor. His letter was dated from Harley Street, July 4, 1878:—

“I could not undertake to explain the conduct of the Liberals as a party in this great matter or of leading individuals among them—for instance, of Mr. Forster, in the autumn of 1876, on his return. But my own course was to bend as far as I possibly could to their views. I in vain strove to get them to bring on, early in 1877, or to support me in bringing on, the terrible indictment against the Turkish Government on the Bulgarian question established by the Blue Books. Failing in this, I had to put it into a pamphlet which drew but moderate attention. With regard to the early months of the present year, I must own that the people showed a changeableness between December and March which I have not been able thoroughly to understand. But I think the Liberals of the City were dastardly to the last degree in shrinking from the duty of exposing the organised and paid rowdyism (from the Lord Mayor's part downwards)

which was undoubtedly a main agent in the present change."

Mr. Forster's speech in 1876, to which Mr. Gladstone refers, was a good speech, the effect of which was spoiled by the persistent efforts of the lukewarm Liberals to make believe that it was conceived in a spirit of hostility to Mr. Gladstone's bag-and-baggage policy. Mr. Forster was unfortunate in being disliked by the Birmingham group, which eagerly clung to the worst interpretation of his speech, while the Whig section played unwittingly into the hands of his enemies by their efforts to make out that Mr. Forster was of their way of thinking. The organised rowdyism in the City of London, to which Mr. Gladstone referred, produced an effect in London altogether out of proportion to its influence on the country at large. The change in the opinion of the people which puzzled Mr. Gladstone between December and March has already been explained. It was very much on the surface. The bye-elections showed that even when the London Jingoës were craziest, the electors would have given Mr. Gladstone the majority which he afterwards secured in 1880.

This was not the general opinion. Mr. Forster believed that the country was backing the Government. The *Standard* having asserted that Mr. Gladstone had expressed himself in the same sense, I wrote to protest. Mr. Gladstone replied as follows :—

"I have never made the admission imputed to me by the *Standard* and other newspapers respecting national approval. I do not say the matter has always been free from doubt, but on the whole I think the evidence leans to the other view, which you entertain and gallantly defend."

What Lord Beaconsfield thought of the opinion of the country in 1878 is not on record. He may have estimated at its true value the frothy semblance of popular enthusiasm that hailed his return. It is more likely that he was himself deceived. Two years later, when he dissolved Parliament, he confidently anticipated that the Conservatives would come back with a majority. For Lord Beaconsfield despised the science of bye-elections.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BERLIN TREATY.

THE proceedings at the Berlin Congress were little more than the ratification, with the sanction of the European Areopagus, of the secret capitulation negotiated between Count Schouvaloff and Lord Salisbury. One or two points which had been referred to the Congress for decision afforded Lord Beaconsfield an opportunity for indulging in the cheap histrionics which had so often stood him in good stead when he had to befool his party or make dupes of the public.

It having been agreed that Bulgaria, the big Bulgaria of San Stefano, should be divided into three parts,—Northern Bulgaria entirely free under its own Prince; Eastern Roumelia half-free, with autonomous institutions under a Governor appointed by the Sultan with the concurrence of the Great Powers; and Macedonia thrust back under the Turkish yoke,—the question arose whether the Turks should or should not be allowed to garrison the Balkan passes. Russia objected, with reason. It was necessary for Lord Beaconsfield's domestic policy that he should seem to have scored off Russia in some way or other. To demand for the Turks the right to regarrison the passes from which they had been driven by Russian arms was certain to irritate the Russians, and there-

fore could not fail to gratify the anti-Russians at home.¹

It was a demand which was of no practical value. As the *Pall Mall Gazette* pointed out, the right to garrison forts on the Balkan crests with the country on both sides in hostile hands was the right conferred upon a bird to garrison a trap. The fantastic character of the proposition probably endeared it to Lord Beaconsfield, and he selected it as the basis for an ultimatum. When Russia objected to give way, he ordered a special train to be in readiness to take him home next morning, and convinced Prince Bismarck that he would break up the Congress, and risk a general war rather than abandon his demand. It was all in the very best style of the sensational melodrama. M. de Blowitz of the *Times* was employed to turn on the limelight when Lord Beaconsfield struck an attitude as Ajax defying the lightning, while Russia and all her myrmidons cowered grovelling at his feet. It was most exquisite fooling gone through by the

¹ How intensely the Russians resented this particular proposal may be judged from the following extract from M. Aksakoff's speech of July 4. M. Aksakoff took the proposition *au sérieux*, not realising with what a farceur the scheme originated :—

“ Experience having shown that the Balkans, viewed hitherto as an insurmountable natural obstacle, could not prevent the advance of our armies, the Congress has issued orders for the construction of a line of forts (of course with the aid of English engineers and English money) along the whole extent of the Balkan range, which, manned by Turkish garrisons, will render the Balkans virtually impregnable. Was it for this, then, that our brave troops toiled so indefatigably and died so heroically in escalading the Balkans in the height of winter ? Without a deep blush of shame, without heartfelt grief, can the Russian henceforth pronounce the words : Shipka, Carlova, Bayazid, and all those names of places rendered illustrious by the valour, thickly strewn with the graves of our heroes, given over now to be dishonoured by the Turk ? Our soldiers, on their return home, will not thank those diplomatists who wrested from the Congress the fruits of this campaign.”

chief actor with the most imperturbable gravity. The Jingo mob in the Press and in the street yelled itself hoarse with enthusiasm as the leading mountebank of the world gravely announced on his return that he had brought back "Peace with Honour" from Berlin: Peace that no one had endangered but himself, and Honour that he had besmirched by the almost inconceivable fraud of the Cyprus Convention.¹

The Anglo-Turkish Convention, by which the British Government undertook to defend the Asiatic possessions of the Sultan against Russian attack, in consideration of which promise he allowed us to occupy and administer the Island of Cyprus, was signed on June 4, but was not published till July 9, within four days of the close of the Congress of Berlin. Of this "insane covenant" more will be said hereafter. It is sufficient here to quote a few sentences from Madame Novikoff's letter on the Convention:—

"What do Russians think of the Anglo-Turkish Convention? Frankly speaking, very little. If England meant to fulfil her new responsibilities, she would prepare to meet her obligations. Seeing that nothing is done, we think it practically means nothing. Theoretically it is the historical justification of the

¹ Charles Peace, a famous burglar of those days, who achieved great notoriety by helping himself to his neighbours' spoons, did not boast of honour when he conveyed his Cypriote annexations.

"Peace thirty years ago became a household word, and it was impossible to say 'peace' without thinking of him. Hence a delightful incident in an intensely Conservative borough, where, during certain party celebrations, a large transparency was exhibited showing Lords Beaconsfield and Salisbury together, above the motto 'Peace with Honour.' The sitting Member was approached by an old woman with the polite question: 'If you please, sir, will you tell me which is Peace?'"—*Daily Chronicle*.

Treaty of Kairnardji, the tardy but complete admission by England of the principle adopted by Russia a hundred years ago. The work of Lord Clarendon has been undone by Lord Beaconsfield, and the Russian principles, eclipsed by the disasters at Sebastopol, have been vindicated at last by the English Government. Russia has henceforth a free hand. Russia evidently has now the right to make conventions with the Sultan, and we could let you have much more than Cyprus to regain the right of direct dealing with the Sultan without foreign intermeddling. If we are still to be rivals, we cannot sufficiently express our obligations to Lord Beaconsfield, whose only fault is that by always moving his pieces into our hands he makes the game too easy to be exciting or even interesting."

Madame Novikoff wrote to me, August 24, 1878:—

"There is a question, to which I must draw your attention. I have never seen it mentioned as yet in the English Press. The Treaty of '56 did not allow any of the Great Powers to make any separate convention with Turkey. Therefore Russia was bound to make only a 'preliminary' at San Stefano. Now the Berlin Congress has not abolished, only modified, our separate treaty, thus allowing Russia to deal with Turkey alone. Since the Anglo-Turkish Convention that principle of independence is reinforced. Henceforth Russia will have no reason whatever to consult Europe in some sort of arrangement with her dying and starving Mohammedan neighbour."

In England there were some who hoped that it might be possible to use the Anglo-Turkish Con-

vention for the regeneration of Asia Minor. I had written an article in this sense, and had put forward, as I had often done before, a protest against the notion that the Liberal party was indifferent to its Imperial responsibilities. Mr. Chamberlain wrote to me on August 10 expressing his entire accord with me on both questions. As to the Anglo-Turkish Convention, he said :—

“ If the Government, after all necessary inquiry, and with full information, proposed to invite the country to undertake a great missionary work of civilisation in Asiatic Turkey,—although it was open to doubt if it were not already too heavily burdened with our Indian responsibilities,—yet the task was one so noble and so worthy of a great nation that I should be disposed to do all in my power to support their policy.”

From Mr. Gladstone I received a note which is in curious contrast to Mr. Chamberlain's :—

“ *July 24, 1878.*

“ MY DEAR SIR,—It is a matter of some dismay to receive from a combatant of your hearty and courageous spirit an account that large portions of our best, *i.e.* our Northern, friends are carried away by the charm of the Asiatic Protectorate.

“ I cannot think that the delusion will last. Here you will observe there is on the part of its friends a disposition to minimise, which proves that they have a sense of the weakness of the ground.

“ There is much puzzle and bewilderment, but I do not here see the signs that any one need fear to attack it.

“No doubt it is open to the greatest diversities of interpretation, and there are ways out of it by finding the Turkish arrangements for reform unsatisfactory.

“But that means the abandonment of the Asiatic Christians. Why did we not at Berlin recommend the extension beyond Armenia of the principles which the Congress has laid down by Armenia?

“But were the arrangement in itself the best in the world, who can defend—

“1. The concealment from Parliament until after ratification.

“2. The concealment from the Congress, and the shameless abandonment of all the loud professions, sustained by the expenditure of many millions, about European law?—Yours faithfully,

“W. E. GLADSTONE.”

Mr. Chamberlain and the “Northern friends” speedily discovered that the Anglo-Turkish Convention was a sham, a delusion, and a snare. But not even Mr. Gladstone realised how fatal an obstacle this Convention placed in the way of ameliorating the condition of the Asiatic Christians.

Madame Novikoff, however, cared little for the Anglo-Turkish Convention then. She was to discover its mischievous importance seventeen years later. In those days her point of view was always the same. Her supreme object was to secure the liberation of the Southern Slavs, for whom her brother had died. As she said quite truly in reply to expostulations from friends who bade her reflect how much Russia had gained: “If we had entered upon the war simply to annihilate Lord Beaconsfield’s policy, the Berlin Treaty would be a great and complete success. There

is hardly a demand that our diplomats have made for Russia that your Premier has not granted kindly enough. But the proposals which extended the area of freedom and emancipated the Slavs, these he has curtailed, with the willing assent of interested and designing intriguers, who made us play at Berlin the part of a practical Pilate."

It was reserved for M. Aksakoff to give the most eloquent and authoritative expression of the indignation of the Russians at the sacrifice of the men of Macedonia. In the speech to which Madame Novikoff referred Mr. Gladstone, the President of the Moscow Slavonic Committee appealed from the Russian plenipotentiaries at Berlin to the Tsar at St. Petersburg:—

"Never," said M. Aksakoff, "did any war originate such sacrifices, prompted by sublime charity, as this which had been undertaken for the sole purpose of delivering all the Bulgarians from the Russian yoke. By the Treaty of San Stefano the whole of Bulgaria was freed. But now it would appear, with the sanction of the self-same generous liberator of Bulgaria, Bulgaria is sawn asunder alive, and the best, the richest portion of her territory finds itself anew under the Turkish yoke.

"No disaster has occurred, no battle, no defeat. Beaconsfield stamped his foot, Austria held up a threatening finger, Russian diplomats were terrified, and all was surrendered.

"But who in Europe would have decided on war? To give way without firing a shot is not a concession, it is a desertion. Not England, indeed, who has only her Indian monsters on land; for even in a naval warfare she would suffer more than we should. Not Austria, indeed, whose whole body is no more than a

heel of Achilles, who, as well she may, fears more than anything else a war with Russia ; for the raising of the Austrian question depends on the will of Russia alone !

“ Judge for yourselves who then among these, whether the mere anarchists or the Government Nihilists, not less lacking faith and patriotism—who, in point of fact, are those Russia has most cause to fear ? who are those most prejudicial to her moral development and her civic dignity ? ”

To declare that the Tsar and Prince Gortschakoff were more lacking in faith and patriotism than the Anarchists, and more prejudicial to Russia’s moral development and civic dignity, was too strong to be passed unnoticed.

M. Aksakoff was ordered to leave Moscow and go to his country residence, a place which the President of the Slavonic Committee did not possess. His friends lost no time in supplying the deficiency, and he spent a couple of months at a country place belonging to his sister-in-law, Miss Tutcheff, four or five hours distant from Moscow.

Madame Novikoff was very unhappy, not without cause, and she roundly upbraided the English Liberals for not having protested against the re-enslavement of Southern Bulgaria. She said :—

“ We—the ridiculed Muscovites—were sneered at when we still spoke of England’s love for liberty, love for justice, love for high aim and beliefs ! Yes, you were not our friends ‘in need.’ You became frozen and wise when your sympathy was most needed ” !

Even Mr. Gladstone came under her censure. She complained :—

" In 1878, the Turkish charter of absolute authority in South-Western Bulgaria, annulled by Russia at San Stefano, was deliberately restored by Europe at Berlin, but against this outrage has even Mr. Gladstone so much as uttered a single protest ? " ¹

Madame Novikoff was inconsolable. She wrote to her friends, she wrote to the English and Russian Press, she seized the opportunity of upbraiding Prince Gortschakoff to his face for what she did not hesitate to describe as the betrayal of Bulgaria and the besmirching of the honour of Russia.

Here is a memorandum I found among her papers of her interview with the Imperial Chancellor :—

" July 29, 1878.

" Found a crowd of the Foreign Office people at the St. Petersburg station. They all came to take

¹ " The famous Berlin Congress divided Bulgaria into three unequal parts : Bulgaria proper wholly free ; South-Eastern Bulgaria (baptized Roumelia) half-free ; and the large tract of country stretching westward from the Rhodope to Mount Pindus, which was handed back to the absolute dominion of the Sultan ; according to the celebrated German Geographer, Kiepert, the Bulgaria of San Stefano, the Bulgaria that Russia emancipated, consisted of 65,000 square miles, with 3,980,000 inhabitants. The Congress ' Bulgaria ' consists only of 24,404 square miles, with 1,773,000 inhabitants. Eastern Roumelia, which was only half freed, has 13,646 square miles and 740,000 inhabitants. Thus the Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia, whose emancipation and semi-emancipation the Congress legalised, consist only of 38,050 square miles with 2,500,000 inhabitants ; and a great area of 27,510 square miles, with a population of 1,500,000, was re-enslaved by England at the Congress without any guarantee from the Turks against a repetition of the atrocities which occasioned the war.

" The Bulgaria handed back to what an English friend of mine described as ' the uncovenanted mercies of the Turks,' is actually greater in extent and almost equal in population to the Bulgaria north of the Balkans, which alone was really free. It is this portion of Bulgaria, given back unreservedly to the Turks, now known as Macedonia, which has been the plague of Europe ever since." —*Russia and England.*

leave of Prince Gortschakoff. I tried to avoid them all, but the old Chancellor saw me, and insisted upon my accepting a seat in his Imperial train. He was accompanied only by his two secretaries. At first I refused, but on second thoughts I accepted, as I wanted to get from him some special information about the horrid Berlin Congress.

“The following conversation took place:—

“*Gortschakoff* : ‘Happy to see you. I hear you went to Moscow. What was going on there?’

“*I* : ‘Precisely what had to take place there. Everybody is indignant beyond any description with Aksakoff’s banishment from Moscow, because he only said the truth.’

“*Gortschakoff* : ‘Ah yes, I remember. You are a great friend of Aksakoff’s?’

“*I* : ‘Of course I am, his friend and his wife’s. But we became most intimate only of late, and saw each other almost every day.’

“*Gortschakoff* (smiling) : ‘Yes, yes, I know. But tell me, have you not been obliged, like Aksakoff, to leave the capital?’

“*I* : ‘That piece of news has not reached me yet, at all events, but of course, if Aksakoff has deserved such a punishment, it is obvious that I am as guilty as he is. Thousands of Russians think and feel as he thinks and as he feels.’

“*Gortschakoff* (rather indignant) : ‘What? He has laughed at the Emperor’s orders, and declared to the Governor-General, Prince Dolgorouky, that he has received altogether seven Imperial reprimands in his life. Surely that is impertinent enough.’

“*I* : ‘My impression is, it was infamous on the part of Dolgorouky to report a joke which obviously



PRINCE GORTSCHAKOFF.
Chancellor of the Russian Empire, 1863-1883.

was made for private information, not as an official reply to His Majesty. As to Aksakoff's speech in the Slavonic Society, what he said there was the result of his deep conviction and of his patriotic views. These views, of course, he wanted his Emperor to know.'

"*Gortschakoff* (becoming more and more angry and indignant): 'You are too devoted to the Slavonic cause, so is also Aksakoff. He is mad about politics. If Moscow views had to lead us, it would be a nice state of things.'

"*I*: 'At all events, Russia would keep her word, her promise. Believe me, Prince, to exile Aksakoff at the present moment is a terrible blunder. As it is, people were all losing heart and faith. What has been going on in Berlin? The Slavs are sacrificed.'

"*Gortschakoff* (interrupting me): 'This is not true. Who has sacrificed them? Not I. Surely you know that I was strongly opposed to the partition of Bulgaria; but to start a new war on their behalf was more than I dared to do. Russia first—the Slavs come next.'

"*I*: 'The Jews are introduced in the poor young Slavonic provinces.'

"*Gortschakoff* (again interrupting): 'I opposed that measure. The Jews are more numerous in Roumania than amongst the Slavs. Besides, pray, pray avoid the word Slav: talk of the Christians; this is a wider idea.'

"*I*: 'But then you would like also to banish the word "Russia," because, after all, who says one says the other!'

"*Gortschakoff*: 'I beg your pardon. I only avoid putting the red rag before the bull—that's all.'

"*I* (continuing): 'No sooner have we the pleasure

of reading the Berlin telegrams than we have to read the abominable speech of the Jew Beaconsfield with his famous Stop !'

" *Gortschakoff* : ' Oh, that was only a little parliamentary trick, but I admit it was a blunder on his part.'

" Then *Gortschakoff* stopped and tried to smile : ' Tell me, you have really not been banished from Moscow ?' asked he. ' But I must tell you—your friend Gladstone is also quite wrong in blaming Russia for taking back a slice of Bessarabia which belonged to her before.'

" *I* : ' Well, yes, Gladstone has also to please his electors. Except my great friend Froude, they all protested against that very small annexation. But you must always keep in mind that Gladstone would never have allowed the Jew to declare war against Russia. That's more important to keep in mind.'

" *Gortschakoff* : ' I must tell you that, personally, I cannot complain of Beaconsfield. He called on me no end of times, and was most complimentary. Called also on my son. He told me, amongst other things, that whenever he hears a bon mot he always says, Oh, it is not so good as what used to be said by Prince *Gortschakoff*.'

" *I* : ' Prince, I must tell you that Lord Salisbury said not long ago that Beaconsfield's power lay in his shameless habit of flattering everybody, taking only good care to flatter when he is face to face with his interlocutor.'

" *Gortschakoff* : ' Oh, but I am not easily taken in by flattery !' ¹ (This made me quite breathless, and I

¹ Charles Villiers once told a story which he declared was quite true, and which it may be amusing to quote here. He said :—

" Believe me, *Dizzy's* main power was based on the absence of all

said nothing.) Soon after I pleaded fatigue, and left the Prince's carriage.

"My frank remarks have not made him angry, because 'Remember,' he said, 'at least we annulled the Treaty of Paris.' He added boastingly—

"'I did not countersign the Treaty of '56. It was Nesselrode's doing, but I have entirely abolished it.'

"The Prince then complained of my total inability to mince my words: 'There is an antique, an unsparing frankness about you which spoils everything you say about politics,' declared he. 'You are too blunt.'

"'But life is so short,' I interrupted, 'one has to save time; besides, I seldom speak about politics. I only write, and even this only when I have to discuss England, Russia, Austria, Germany, France, Turkey, or Judaism!'

"'You wound everybody, even your friends,' moral restraints, and on his inconceivable flattery towards all he had to deal with. Shall I tell you by what means he has captivated our Queen? Some years ago she wrote *Reminiscences of Life in Scotland*, and sent a copy to each of us, to all Members of Parliament. To tell the truth, we were rather perplexed by it, since we not only had to thank Majesty for this kindness but also, however unwilling, to pass some opinion on it.

"'Have you ever read that book?' my interlocutor suddenly asked me.

"'No, I only hastily perused it.'

"'What would you compare it with?' he insisted, his eyes expressing laughter all the while.

"'To be candid,' I said, 'with Berquin, or with the Countess Genlis.'

"We thought about the same. But we were evidently expected to offer madrigals and to burn incense. What was to be done? We were all in a fix; Dizzy alone never lost courage. 'This production,' he wrote, 'can only be compared to Shakespeare, or to the Gospels.' I remained silent, while he went on, as if speaking to himself—

"'Yes, it wants a lot of courage for serving such a dish, and an exceptionally robust health to assimilate it!''

continued he, scarcely paying attention to my interruptions. 'You reject every guidance, every good advice; you laugh at prudence and moderation; you go ahead unreasonably, heedlessly! And when I think that in England you could have been taken for one of us—for a Russian agent,' added he, smiling contemptuously, lifting his shoulders.

" 'But I am an agent,' announced I.

" 'Ah, indeed! and whose agent are you, may I ask?'

" 'Why, of course, my own,' said I, quite satisfied with that slavery; 'and should I be attacked from all sides—as our poor soldiers were on the Shipka Pass—well, never mind! Come of it what it may, life after all is nothing but a struggle, though, fortunately, not always a struggle for life only!'

Evidently a lively conversation. She wrote me afterwards:—

"Old Gortschakoff writes from Wildbad: 'He'll never forget the charming conversations he had with me during our journey.' Why, we were all the time quarrelling! 'Charming,' indeed!—easily pleased!'

Madame Novikoff sent a brief report of her conversation with Prince Gortschakoff to M. de Laveleye. He replied:—

"September 1, 1878.

"DEAR MADAME,—How very much your letter has interested me! You represent the enthusiasm, the wit, the heart, the future!

"But the Chancellor was the present, and cold common sense!

"Russia cannot and ought not to do more.

"The future of the Southern Slavs is henceforward

assured, and the Turk is doomed. What more do you want ?

“The programme of Nicholas I. has been executed, and England has taken her share in the heritage of the Sick Man.

“Henceforth the fiction of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire is at an end. That is the principal thing.

“Resistance to Austria is a mistake.

“Dalmatia ought to be joined to her Hinterland. Austria alone can do it.

“She will make the railway for the use of the Slavs. A great movement. . . .

“Russia ought to think well beforehand, and not overburden her peasants with taxes.

“Better almost become bankrupt, if need be.”

General Skobelev, the Bayard of the War, expressed himself as fiercely as M. Aksakoff and Madame Novikoff on the subject of the betrayal of the Southern Slavs.

After the signature of the Berlin Treaty Skobelev bluntly declared his hatred of the policy of the Beaconsfield Government, when in command of the army of occupation in Bulgaria :—

“Cannot you see how this policy should stir us so ? For two years we have deluged this land (Bulgaria) with our blood. Our brothers are slain, our country has made enormous sacrifices, widows mourn, children weep, and fathers lament the loss of promising sons. All this we would have borne with the patience which God gives had the full freedom which we had won for our brothers in race and religion, in language and faith, been accorded to them. But accursed diplomacy

steps in and says, 'No ; only the smaller half of them shall be free, and the greater number shall be again handed over to the tender mercies of the Turks.' You know yourself what the Turks have been, and are, and ever will be ; and placing yourself in our position, would you not also be consumed with wrath that our sacrifices are to be in vain, and that the men over whose graves we are now treading should have died for nought ? ”

Fortunately, only half of the mischief intended by Lord Beaconsfield was carried out. Eastern Roumelia was from the first almost as free as Northern Bulgaria, and before ten years had passed it was united to the Principality. Macedonia remains to this day the monument of our shame.

There were many who sympathised with Madame Novikoff in England. Sir George W. Cox wrote :—

“ I can perfectly understand and enter into M. Aksakoff's indignation ; but his speech proves only that Russian diplomatists are no better than English diplomatists.

“ When shall we be rid of our despots ? Beaconsfield most richly deserves Strafford's punishment ; but no one on his side seems to see that his doings are worse than those of the great counsellor of Charles the First.”

Kinglake endeavoured to pour oil on the troubled waters :—

“ *August 1, 1878.*

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,—In answer to your short note, I began writing a letter, but it went to such a length that I felt I must postpone the statement

of my views about the Congress until the happy day when I trust we shall soon—how soon?—be meeting.

“To do justice to your own Government, you must remember that Russia, in undertaking the war, was substantially the ‘Mandatory,’ not indeed of England, but of the Continent, and was bound to act in such a way as should not break up the understanding between the three Emperors. If Russia had had any pretensions to invade Turkey without the acquiescence of Austria, her line of advance would not of course be one which opened the flank to Austrian assailants, and she would have had to go *viâ* Vienna, Miss, obtaining for that purpose, if she could, a Firman from Bismarck!

“Russia, following the course she did, with Austria on her flank and rear, was under actual compulsion to take care to make the arrangements of San Stefano subject to the assent of Austria, and accordingly Russia fairly called that part of the San Stefano treaty a mere *ébauche*.

“The Congress was a mere comedy, and if you first satisfy yourself as to what it was that your Government was *really* anxious to obtain, and then look at the Salisbury-Schouvaloff agreement of the 30th May, you will see that, thanks to the imbecility of our ‘mountebank,’ Schouvaloff obtained one of the most signal diplomatic victories that was ever won.

“When, when, *when*, Miss, will you come?—Your affectionate

A. W. K.”

In reply to my remonstrances she wrote:—

“August 24, 1878.

“You are right. As long as I knew about the Schouvaloff-Salisbury convention through you I was

pleased with it, but I never supposed Russia would sacrifice the Slavs as much as she did at Berlin. Of course eleven millions of Christians are better off than before, chiefly thanks to Russia. Well, it is something, of course, but it might have been better still."

An official *communiqué* in the Government *Messenger* expressed the regret of the Imperial Cabinet that it had been obliged to abandon the San Stefano settlement: "Each of our wars has been an additional step to the final goal, and thus has been traced the sanguinary but glorious furrow which our traditions have left in history, and which must lead up to our national mission, the deliverance of the Christian East. If much remains to be done to finish it, much has nevertheless been done."

This pleased Madame Novikoff and her friends; but others it did not please, as the following letter shows:—

"MARIENBAD, *August 31, 1878.*

"The Austrian Ambassador, General Langenau, is here. We had a long talk together about the official *communiqué*. He is furious with it. 'It is the most explicit disapproval of the Berlin Congress. They tell me it was necessary to show to the Russian people that your Government sympathised with Moscow's indignation, and felt how far they were all united. But I am very sorry for that union,' said he very frankly. *Je crois bien!* If it were not for Aksakoff's speech, perhaps this declaration would never have appeared."

In this month of August the anti-Russians, still smarting under their betrayal by Lord Beaconsfield, seized the opportunity afforded by the repression of the Rhodope insurrection to endeavour to get up an

Atrocity Agitation against Russia. The evidence on which this campaign was based was subjected to a searching examination by a writer in the *Spectator*. Madame Novikoff resented bitterly the accusations brought against the Russian soldiers, whose conduct during the campaign had been admittedly beyond reproach :—

“ After the capital specimens we have had of English ‘ veracity,’ the testimonies of your consuls and ministers have no authority to me whatever.”

“ Certain accusations,” she wrote, “ we disdain to notice.” Lord Shaftesbury’s “ solemn condemnation of poor little Russia ” made her smile “ Qui dit trop, ne dit rien. We think it undignified to refute certain calumnies.”

It was difficult, however, to dismiss in this airy fashion the letter she received from Mr. Gladstone on the subject :—

“ *August 29, 1878.*

“ MY DEAR MADAME NOVIKOFF,—I have received with much interest your letters of the 18th and 26th, and I am glad that the copies of my speech reached you safely this time. I have told you, I think, repeatedly that the local elections occurring from time to time are the best index to the state of public feeling in this country. Two have just occurred: one in a town, the other in a Highland Scotch county.¹ In both the Government brought about the vacancies, and were confident of succeeding at the new elections. In both they are defeated, and by rather large majorities. These are quite recent. I have just learned the last by telegram. No man can say, however, with reasonable assurance, what the result of a General

¹ Newcastle-under-Lyme and Argyllshire.

Election would be. The Tories have no great faith in it, or they would dissolve now.

“A very painful subject has come above the horizon, that of the outrages in Bulgaria.

“The report of the Rhodope Commission is not yet in our hands, but there are intimations of its contents which cannot be, I fear, very far from the mark. It was a perfect farce to put a Turk on that Commission, but it could be of little consequence. I cannot doubt but that a rather large number of Bulgarians have committed horrible and detestable outrages. Shocking as this is, it may be to some extent accounted for. What is also shocking, and what surprises me, is the apparent implication, on various occasions, of Russian soldiery in these proceedings and the lack, on the part of Russian authorities, of the right method of treating them. I think it likely that, when the report is published, there will be a considerable outburst of feeling here, partly genuine, partly promoted in retaliation for the proceedings of 1876 and from general hostility among certain partisans to Russia. I gladly defended the conduct of the Russian army in Turkestan, but I do not see how to *defend* the conduct now imputed. I shall indeed be glad if the imputations are disproved; and, I am sorry to say, they do not seem to rest on British authority only.—I remain most truly yours,

“W. E. GLADSTONE.”

What Madame Novikoff wrote to Mr. Gladstone I do not know. What she wrote to me showed no disposition to enter into the question:—

“MARIENBAD, *September 5, 1878.*

“And so English Liberals want to organise indignation meetings against Russia! Oh, divine im-

partiality! What a touching eagerness to swallow up anything invented against Russia! How amused Beaconsfield and Layard ought to be, in seeing the easy way that they exercise influence over their domestic enemies! I am beginning to think that our friends in England care for truth as little as our enemies. Well—have your indignation meetings, and play Beaconsfield's game!"

It was several months before we heard the last of the Rhodope affair, which ultimately was allowed to drop, having served its purpose.

The public was in no mood to embark upon a new agitation. When the Berlin Treaty was signed, and it was evident there was to be no war, Mr. Froude's interest in the Eastern Question subsided. He left London for Devonshire, but in the midst of the hurry and confusion of packing up he wrote her a letter (July 19) from which I quote the following extract :—

"Of home politics I have nothing to tell you, except that something like a rebellion is not far off in Ireland. For which Gladstone will be answerable. His one notion is to put out a fire by pouring melted fat upon it; and if he and his friends get scorched by the flame, some of us at heart will not be particularly sorry.

"We English are like children. Something rises which interests us: we go mad about it; we think, speak, and dream of nothing else; a year, perhaps a month after, we are off after a new excitement, and have utterly and totally forgotten that we ever cared about the other. I don't suppose that you could get fifty people together now in any part of the country to discuss the Eastern Question: we think it is all

settled, that WE have settled it, and there is an end. In all countries I suppose the majority are fools, but there is none where the fools have things so absolutely their own way as in these blessed Islands.

“Carlyle ate some strawberries last week ; they disagreed with him, and he told us solemnly that he was dying. We represented that things need not be so serious, and were told indignantly that we knew nothing about the matter. He is well again now, better perhaps than he was before, but we have to be cautious how we tell him so.

“I am sorry that you have given up America ; there, not here, is the future of the English race. You can breathe freely among the people there without being smothered in lies and conventionalities. Think of it again. You will meet many unknown friends there whom your book has made for you.—Yours ever truly, J. A. FROUDE.”

END OF FIRST VOLUME.

